FALSTAFF'S WEDDING,

A

COMEDY:

AS IT IS ACTED

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL

IN DRURY-LANE.

BEING A SEQUEL TO

THE SECOND PART OF THE PLAY OF

KING HENRY THE FOURTH.

WRITTEN IN IMITATION OF SHAKESPEARE,

BY W. KENRICK.

In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.

LONDON,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ſucceſs, which a juvenile ſketch of this Play hath met with in publication, having induced the Author to bring it on the ſtage; he flatters himſelf the alterations, which were thought neceſſary to accommodate it to a theatrical audience, will not give leſs ſatisfaction to the reader than ſuch ſcenes as he was obliged on that account to reject.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. DODD, in the Character of MERCURY.

[Mercury deſcends from the clouds, flying acroſs the ſtage: Re-enters, followed by a ſervant, carrying a counſellor's gown and wig.

A LA MERCURE, equipp'd from top to toe,
My godſhip's name and quality you know.
Commiſſion'd from Apollo, I come down
T'attend this bench of juſtices, the town.
Aſſembled here; all members of the quorum:
To lay a matter of complaint before 'em.
The errand's not in character, 'tis true;
But what our betters bid us, we muſt do.
Therefore, t'appear with decency at ſeſſion,
I've ſtole, you ſee, the garb of the profeſſion.
This gown and band belong to ſerjeant Prig —
And this — our brother Puzzle's learned wig. —
[*Putting on the gown*, &c.
Dreſs makes the man, Sirs, *veſtis virum facit* ——
So —— now to buſineſs —— Hem! —— *ſi veſtris placet* ——
May't pleaſe your worſhips —— Forgery, which is grown
To ſuch a height as ne'er before was known ——
I ſay, a forgery hath been committed,
By which king Pluto's mirmidons, outwitted,
Certain choice ſpirits, in theatric ſhape,
Have ſuffer'd from Eliſium to eſcape;
Of Shakeſpeare's offſpring and ideal train,
Sprung, Pallas like, from an immortal brain!
Their names —— I have 'em down —— but, to be brief,
Shall only juſt enumerate the chief.
Imprimis, with Madeira ſwell'd, and ſack,
There's Sir John Falſtaff, alias call'd Plump Jack;
Next, captain Piſtol, a notorious bully;
And Miſs Dol Tearſheet, fam'd for jilting cully;
The widow Quickly, vintner, bawd and whore.
With Bardolph, Peto, Nym and—ſeveral more;
Link'd in a gang, each cut-purſe with his crony,
All arrant thieves and *Dramatis Perſonæ*;
Bent, as ſuppos'd, to proſtitute to ſhame
Th' aforeſaid Shakeſpeare's honour, name and fame.
I ſhall not treſpaſs on your worſhip's time,
T' explain at full the nature of this crime:
But, Poets having an excluſive right
To bring their mental progeny to light,
This right's invaded by the party 'peach'd;
Who, *vi et armis*, hath th' old bard o'er-reach'd.

By

PROLOGUE.

By counterfeiting of his hand, do ye ſee,
Felonioufly to ſet theſe vagrants free;
With baſe deſign t'adopt them for his own,
Tho' Shakeſpeare's property, and his alone.
Such is the fact.——A critic were an aſs,
No doubt, to let ſuch impoſition paſs;
Nor could a cheat ſo palpable ſucceed,
But that the captain of the guard cou'dn't read——
No, not for laughing, tho' to've ſav'd his ſoul;
The ſcene and circumſtances were ſo droll.
Piſtol, with yellow night-cap patch'd with red,
With Mother Quickly was retir'd to bed;
And, waking, ſwore, by Styx, he would not come,
Sans preparation, pike and beat of drum.
Of *aqua-vitæ* having ſtole a flaggon,
Bardolph and Nym were playing at ſnap-dragon;
Sometimes proceeding from hard words to blows,
As by miſtake Nym ſeiz'd on Bardolph's noſe.
With Falſtaff ſat Dol Tearſheet, cheek by joll,
And while ſhe buſs'd his chin and ſcratch'd his poll,
Slipp'd from his thumb his grandſire's copper ring,
For love, not for the value, of the thing:
Then ſtole his empty purſe; but no abuſe;
'Twas only done to keep her hand in uſe:
He ſwearing, he'd be damn'd as ſoon as truſt his
Round belly more with Hall, or his chief-juſtice.
But this is wandering from the point.—They're here,
And on your ſummons ready to appear:
Pleaſe to proceed then to examination;
And be attentive to their information.
If, as your judgment cannot be erroneous,
You take this forgery to be felonious,
The author meaning fraud, I need not mention
Your iſſuing warrants for his apprehenſion;
And when you've caught and into pieces tore him,
Hang up his mangled carcaſe *in terrorem*;
In flagrant crimes the proceſs ſhould be ſhort;
The law is clear——I leave it with the court.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Sir John Falstaff,	Mr. Love.
Juſtice Shallow,	Mr. Parsons.
Maſter Slender,	Mr. Dodd.
Mr. Pleadwell,	Mr. Aichin.
Dr. Caius,	Mr. Baddely.
Friar Lawrence,	Mr. Burton.
Ancient Piſtol,	Mr. King.
Bardolph,	Mr. Moody.
Corporal Nym,	Mr. Ackman.
Gadshill,	Mr. Watkins.
Officer,	Mr. Strange.
Francis,	Maſter Burton.
Peto, and Attendants.	

WOMEN.

Dame Urſula, afterwards Lady Falstaff,	Mrs. Pritchard.
Bridget, her Chambermaid,	Mrs. Bennett.
Mrs. Quickly,	Mrs. Bradshaw.
Dol Tearsheet,	Mrs. Dorman.

FALSTAFF'S

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Street in WESTMINSTER,

On the Day of the Coronation of King HENRY the Fifth.

Enter Sir JOHN FALSTAFF, ſolus.

WHAT a ſcurvy quarter is this? Not a buſh, or a blind Cupid, in the neighbourhood! 'ſblood, my legs will fail me ere I reach a tavern. Phoo—Phoo—It is ſome comfort, however, I eſcap'd with my life. The green-apron'd raſcals, crouding after the proceſſion, had well nigh made an end of me.

SCENE II.

Enter BARDOLPH.

Bar. O, Sir John, I'm glad I have found ye. I was in the fearfulleſt quandary for you in the world. I hope your honour has got no hurt.

Fal. Not its death's wound, I hope; though Hal, indeed, look'd ſomewhat cold upon me.

Bar. Cold, Sir John! I am a-fear'd we ſhall be in limbo ſhortly: for my Lord-chief-juſtice ——

Fal. Hold thy ill-omen'd croaking. If faithful ſervices are thus requited, I will turn cordwainer; yea, cobler, and heel-piece old ſhoes, ere I have to do with blood-royal again. Ingratitude! I hate it.

Bar. To be ſure, Sir John, what you ſay is right; for, as the ſong ſays, ingratitude is worſe than the ſin of witchcraft. But I hop'd your honour got no perſonable harm in the mob: you was carried off the terras, for all the world, like a dunghil from Mill-bank by a ſpring-tide.

Fal. Bardolph, away with thy filthy compariſons! I am ill at eaſe, and more diſpos'd to ſpleen than to merriment. I prythee, look out, and ſee if there be a bawdy-houſe at hand.

Bar. What here, ſo near the court, Sir John?

Fal. Where better? 'Sblood, doſt think there are no whores at Court? Are there no dames of honour? Doſt think Hal hath baniſh'd them too? Look out, look out.

Bar. I will, Sir John. [*Exit* Bardolph.

SCENE III.

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF, ſolus.

I would I were in Eaſt-cheap. Mine hoſteſs hath a moſt excellent cordial; and I never ſtood in more need of it than now. The groſs indignity Hal hath put on me, ſticks in my throat; and, in the end, may go near to choak me. I ſhall never gulp it down: that's flat: unleſs, indeed, a full cup of ſherris help to clear the way. And then, how I ſhall ſtomach it; how I ſhall digeſt it, heaven knows! At preſent, both my perſon and knighthood are in jeopardy; my Lord-chief-juſtice, to whoſe care I am commended, holding me not altogether in good liking. But no matter — if I am to be provided for, what avails it who is my caterer? I could wiſh, nevertheleſs, old white wine ſtood higher in his Lordſhip's favour; that I may not be ſtinted at table, or in my by-drinkings. I like notſuch ſplenetic temperaments; ſuch phlegmatic conſtitutions; grey-beards, that never make allowances for the continual waſte of radical moiſture. —— 'Sblood, I am

I am as foundered and as ſore as a blind horſe in a mill.——Bardolph! where a plague art thou gotten to, caterwauling?

SCENE IV.

Enter Mrs. QUICKLY and DOLL TEARSHEET.

Quick. O, Sir John Falſtaff!

Doll. O, ſweet Sir John!

Fal. How! mine hoſteſs, and my good veſtal Mrs. Tearſheet! ſave ye gentlewomen both, good-morrow.

Hoſt. Godild ye, Sir John——well I vow and proteſt an I didn't ſay he would take as civil notice of his old acquaintance: nay, tho'f he was created by my lord-mayor of London.

Doll. What talk ye of lord-mayors and fuſty citizens, goſſip Quickly? Sir John is a courtier, and to be ſure we muſt gratulate him now as one of the greateſt knights in the nation.——O ſweet Sir John!——

Fal. Truce with your formalities, Mrs. Dorothy. Pray, have you ſeen none of our followers by the way? Piſtol, nor Peto!

Quick. No verily, Sir John, not one.——We have ſeen nothing of any of them to day. They are all gone to the coronation, I warrant; and indeed we ſhould have been there too, hadn't it been for that wicked villain, conſtable Fang, that, by a miſtake of the beadle of our ward, would have carried us to Bridewel this morning.

Fal. How! mine hoſteſs and my fair Dorothy to Bridewel!

Quick. Even to Bridewel, I can aſſure ye.

Fal. But how; how? dame Quickly to Bridewel! a ſecent church-going widow and a modeſt maiden, I would ſay, ſingle gentlewoman, to a houſe of correction! Why, what——

Quick. So I ſaid, Sir John. Nuthook, Nuthook, ſays do you know what you do, ſays I?—Have me to Bridewel, ſays I,—I ſay to Bridewel indeed! a ruptable houſe-

keeper, that has paid ſcot and lot, and born the burthen of half the pariſh any time theſe twenty years.

Fal. That thou haſt, hoſteſs; of the male half, I'll be ſworn for thee.

Quick. Beſides, ſays I, do you know Sir John Falſtaff! ſays I. — Touch a hair of Mrs. Dorothy's head, ſays I, and Sir John will make you ſmart for it, ſays I, ev'ry bone in your ſkin, ſays I.

Fal. And what ſaid the raſcal to that?

Quick. Said, Sir John! he ſtood mumchance, and ſpoke never a living ſyllable, but ſet his vinegar-viſag'd catchpoles upon us; who faſtened their claws into Mrs. Tearſheet's beſt kirtle, and tore it into as many rents and tatters, as there were in the old tapeſtry hangings I pawn'd to fit your honour out for the laſt expedition.

Fal. Pſhaw!

Dol. Yes indeed, Sir John, made a mere tatterdemallion of me. But we did ſo tongue the leather-ear'd vultures ——

Fal. That they were glad to looſe their gripe to get rid of you, I ſuppoſe.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, I was obliged to perduce an angel to convince them we were not the parties indicted.

Fal. Infidel rogues! would nothing leſs than the teſtimony of an angel convince them?

Quick. Ay, I knew how Sir John would take it. O, how ſoundly will the knave conſtable be ſwing'd for this! a jack-in-office raſcal! we ſhall cure the blue-ſkin'd runnion of his itch for whipping, I warrant ye.

SCENE V.

Re-enter BARDOLPH.

Bard. I have been looking all about, Sir John, but I cannot find one.

Quick. What is it Sir John wants, Mr. Bardolph?

Bar. A bawdy-houſe, miſtreſs.

Quick. O Jeſu-Maria! Mrs. Dorothy.

Fal. How, ſirrah! what call'ſt thou a bawdy-houſe

I ſent thee to look out for a houſe of civil entertainment, where I might repoſe myſelf after my fatigue? Why, what, you rogue, would you make of me?

Quick. Marry come up indeed! a bawdy-houſe truly! but as to a houſe of civil entertainment, Sir John; here is one hard by, where the knights and lords, and all the great gentlemen of the court, are entertained, both by night and by day, as civilly as at their own homes; and by gentlewomen as kind to them, I warrant ye, as their own ladies themſelves.—A houſe of civil entertainment, a bawdy-houſe! Why, I keep a houſe of civility myſelf, and I would have you to know Mr. Bardolph——

Bar. Nay, nay, 'tis all one: what Sir John pleaſes.

Quick. Yes, by my truly, and ſo I think it ought, for if Sir John recommends you to the king——

Dol. Nay, were I Sir John, I'm ſure I would never promote ſuch a clown as Bardolph at court.

Bar. Ah! Dol, Dol, I am afraid our promotion will be at the gallows. If Sir John has any intereſt with the hangman, he may get me preferr'd, perhaps, to the top of the ladder.

Dol. Why, how now varlet?

Quick. Do you hear? do you hear, ſweet Sir John?

Fal. Ay, hoſteſs, Bardolph is ſomewhat blunt: but, as for the king——

Quick. Heav'ns bleſs him! a ſweet young prince he was; and, to be ſure, a gracious king he is. But what of him, Sir John?

Fal. Why, marry,—hang him, hoſteſs—Treaſon muſt out as well as murder.

Quick. I am 'maz'd Sir John; why, how is this? what a goodneſs! when—where——

Dol. How is this, good Bardolph?

Fal. Why, I will tell ye how it is. That ſame ungrateful, ſpeaking, pitiful raſcal, we are ſpeaking of, is turn'd fanatick.

Quick. Fanatick! the king a fanatick!

Fal. Ay, fanatick, preſbyter, biſhop, if you will. Let his crown be his mitre; I care not.

Dol.

Dol. We don't take your meaning, Sir John.

Fal. You muſt know then, Dol, that after having, in pure love and affection, ridden poſt day and night four-ſcore and odd miles, to congratulate him on his acceſſion, and condole with him on his father's death; inſtead of bidding me welcome to court, he preached me my own funeral ſermon.

Quick. A funeral ſermon!

Fal. Ay, hoſteſs: for at the end of his diſcourſe he order'd me to be buried alive, at ten miles diſtance from the court. And, to make this unnatural interment the ſurer, he has appointed my Lord-chief-juſtice his under-taker, to ſee to the diſpoſal of my corpſe.

Quick. Buried alive, quoth he! what, what is in all this?

Fal. In plain terms, dame Quickly, your gracious king hath baniſhed me the preſence; and, till he grows a graceleſs prince again, I am forbidden to approach his perſon, within ten miles, on penalty of being hang'd, Take ye me now?

Quick. O Jeſu! is it poſſitable?

Dol. Ah, ha! is it ſo? ſits the wind in that quarter?

Quick. Well, as I am an honeſt woman, who would have thought it? it is a world to ſee!

Dol. And ſo, Sir John is in diſgrace; ſtill plain Jack Falſtaff and one of us! ha! ha! ha! poor blown Jack!

Quick. A ſad diſappointment, indeed, Sir John! but, in good faith, things fall out ſo odd, and the world goes ſo wrong, and the times are ſo hard; that here, there, why, no longer ago now than yeſterday, was I obliged to pay the lord-knows-what-all away for one thing or other: and then my misfortune to day; an angel to the conſtables; and beſides this comes the day after to morrow, when I muſt make up a ſum for the wine-merchant: wherefore if your honour would but diſcharge your ſcore in Eaſt-cheap; becauſe, as why, your honour knows ——

Fal. How's this, dame Quickly?

Quick. Becauſe, I ſay, as why, your honour knows, ſeventy odd pound is a great deal of money for a poor widow woman to loſe.

Fal.

Fal. What talk you of loſing, hoſteſs?

Quick. True, Sir John, as you ſay, to be ſure, I ſhall not be willing to loſe it: for the law is open, and I know which way to get my money.

Fal. I am glad thou doſt, hoſteſs: as in that caſe I need not give myſelf the trouble to pay thee. The law is open, ſay'ſt thou? Ay, like a mouſe-trap, on the catch for nibbling clients. Enter thy action, and I will hold thee a gallon of ſack, thy departed huſband will get out of purgatory ere thou out of the hands of thy lawyer.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, you need not twit me upon that. You need not fling my poor huſband's ſoul in my teeth. He has not been gone ſo long; tho' for the matter of that he might have been in heav'n before now, hadn't I lent you the money Mr. Dumb ſhould have had to ſay maſſes for him. Yes, Sir John, you have put into that great belly of yours what ſhould have got my poor huſband out of purgatory, and now you reproach me for it. Had he been ſtill alive you would not have us'd his diſconſolate widow thus. You wouldn't, Sir John.

Fal. No, I'll be ſworn I ſhould not.

Quick. Well then, Sir John, out of charity, if it were nothing elſe, you ought to repay the money. Nay, if you don't, I'll pray night and day that you may be haunted by his ghoſt. Heav'n reſt his ſoul. I would he might never ſleep quietly in his grave, till he has made you pay me.

Fal. Go to, thou art a fooliſh woman: with good words thou may'ſt be paid.

Quick. No, Sir John, good words will not do. I muſt have money Sir John. The prieſts won't get a ſoul out of purgatory without money. Beſides, Sir John, good words are no payment, I can get no body to take them: good words will not do with me.

Fal. Well, well, I ſay you may be paid——

Quick. May! Sir John, I muſt.——You have thus ſhuffled off and on me, a good while; but I muſt, I muſt be paid, I muſt——

Fal. Heigh! heigh! wilt thou raiſe the neighbourhood on us? If thou art clamorous, I will have thee duck'd

in

in the Thames, for a bawd. What, a-plague, art thou drunk? On the honour of my knighthood thou ſhalt be paid. Doſt thou doubt mine honour?

Quick. Why, Sir John, to be ſure, no-body would ſcruple to confide in your honour's honour: but then you know Sir John (no-body better) what honour is. It will buy neither coals nor candles; nor will my landlord take it for rent, nor the merchant for ſack or ſherry. But would you give me only the half in money, and leave the reſt to honour; ſo that a body might keep open houſe, Sir John. That would be doing ſomething.

Fal. Nay, if thou wilt be advis'd, I will do more for thee.—Bardolph! forget not to go (when I ſend thee) to the caſhier, with whom I left a thouſand pound this morning, and tell him to ſatisfy Mrs. Quickly forthwith.

Quick. A thouſand pound!

Fal. The times are not ſo bad, hoſteſs (thanks to our friend Shallow) but we may yet have a merry bout in Eaſtcheap.—How ſays my Dol!

Dol. Nay, you know, ſweet Jack, I was always at your pleaſure there.

Quick. That I will ſay for her, and a ſweeter-natur'd better hearted creature never lay by the ſide of a true man. But, goodneſs heart! why do we tarry here, when Sir John complain'd of his being fatigued, and was looking for a houſe of civil entertainment? I will ſhew you the way incontinently, Sir John.

Fal. I thank thee, hoſteſs; I am now ſomewhat recruited, and will endeavour to reach Eaſtcheap. And yet a cup of ſack, by the way, I think, would not be amiſs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Tavern in Eaſtcheap.

Enter PISTOL and NYM.

Piſtol. Hang Piſtol up with line of hempen ſtring,
Ere he in rabbet-hutch be cloſe immured.——
Seize the ſtiff cramp upon the fangs of juſtice.

Ny

Nym. Marry-trap, we ſhew'd his myrmidons a light pair of heels tho'. I wonderwhat is become of Sir John. They have certainly nailed his fat paunch. We muſt not venture to the Fleet to ſee. They'll nab us there: and for the matter of that, I ſuppoſe they'll be running the humour upon us here too. I will incontinently go and ſhut myſelf up. The ſtorm may blow over when we are found uninventible.

Piſtol. Piſtol diſdains to ſkulk. *Nolens*, 'tis fate:
But who would *volens* be incarcerate?
Nym, we muſt eat, and money have we none.

Nym. True, *nolus volus*, as you ſay; we muſt eat. I like to ſtarve, like a rat, behind the arras, as little as another man. But what ſhall we do if Sir John be in limbo?

Piſtol. Or *in* or *out*; his follower I no more.
Invention's mother is neceſſity,
And Piſtol's demon is an imp of wit.
Merc'ry ſuggeſts, and Pallas doth approve.
The great Ponjardo del Stilletto's dead,
Profeſſor of the art of ſelf-defence.
His broken foils, his daggers, belts and blades,
The ſtock in trade, I'll purchaſe upon tick:
My face, diſguis'd with an uſurped beard,
Theſe jutting eye-brows, turn'd from black to red,
Shall ſkreen from knowledge. Thou ſhalt too aſſume
A borrowed excrement, and partner be
In ſtock and block: ſince fighting's grown a trade,
Pence are pick'd up by maſters of the blade.

Nym. The thought is lucky. Angels will enſue. But muſt we not tranſmutify our names?

Piſtol. My brain's my godfather, and, at the font,
Me, Don Anticho del Piſtolo, called.

Nym. And pray what did this ſame godfather call me?

Piſtol. Signior Nymwego!

Nym. Good! Signior Nymwego! and you Don Anticho del Piſtolo! I will hold them in oblivion. The trick of it pleaſes. But, here comes Quickly and Dol.

SCENE VII.

Enter QUICKLY and DOL TEARSHEET.

Quick. So, Gentlemen! you are got home before Sir John, I ſee.

Piſtol. How fares the knight? Is he in durance vile?

Quick. No, by my truly; he returns forthwith; but in a woful plight. Francis! What, Francis! Bring the great chair for Sir John.

Francis within. Anon, Anon, Sir.

Dol. to *Nym.* Sirrah, Nym, hath Falſtaff got money by him?

Nym. Yes, a thouſand Pound; he borrowed it of Juſtice Shallow: but we ſhall be little the better for that; for the knight will certainly be in limbo.

Dol. May be, *no*; and may be, *yes*. It is no matter.

[*Dol. and Quickly confer apart.*

Nym. to *Piſtol.* [*who ſtands muſing.*] Does the humour hold? Or ſhall we wait the coming of the knight?

Piſtol. And ſhare his fate in baſe incarceration!
Shall Don Anticho del Piſtolo prove
A vile hunt-counter? No — We'll thrive alone.
Hoſteſs farewel; we may return — or not.

Nym. Bye Dol. [*Exeunt* Piſtol *and* Nym.

SCENE VIII.

Quick. 'Tis certainly ſo; Sir John hath got the money.

Dol. I know not that; but if he has, he'll probably carry it to jail with him. Here comes Bardolph, aſk him.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

Enter BARDOLPH.

Quick. Is Sir John at hand, Bardolph?

Bar. He will be here incontinently, hoſteſs: I only ſtept before, to let you know he was a coming.

Quick. But is it veritably true, Bardolph, that Sir John has got a thouſand pound by him?

Dol. Ay, is that true, Bardolph?

Bar. True, upon honour; he had it of juſtice Shallow, of Glouceſterſhire; and it lies now in maſter Gingle-caſh, the banker's hands. But Sir John will be here momentably. Is ev'ry thing ready?

Quick. In a minute we are all clear. Run, good Dol, and receive the knight at the door. Francis! what, Francis!

Fran. (without) Anon, anon, Sir.

Quick. Light up candles in the paſſage. A bottle of ſherris, Francis, quick, you ſleeping knave.——Always upon a ſnail's gallop! O that ever woman ſhould be plagu'd with ſuch creeping varlets!

Dol. O, here is Sir John, himſelf.

SCENE X.

Enter Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.

Quick. Jaded to death, I warrant!—— An eaſy chair, good Bardolph. Pleaſe you to depoſe yourſelf, Sir John.

Fal. Soh! now have I taken up my ſitting again, in my old quarters. A glaſs of ſherris, Francis!

Dol And how do you find yourſelf, my ſweet knight?

Fal. Tolerably thirſty. (*Drinks*) I can drink; and that is all the bodily functions I am capable of. I am as ſtiff,

ev'ry part about me, as a walking taylor, or Don Diego on a ſign-poſt.

Dol. Nay, Sir John, if that be the caſe, it is not over with you yet. Give me a buſs.

Fal. Go, Dol, you are riggiſh——get you gone you water-wag-tail, you; I am not merrily diſpos'd.

Dol. But, will you give me a new kirtle at Bartlemew-fair?

Fal. I will, Dol.——Nay, I cannot bear you on my knee.

Dol. Why, how came you ſo terribly maul'd, my leman?

Fal. Did not I tell ye?

Quick. No indeed, Sir John, your honour ſpoke of fatigue; but did not deſcend to particles.

Fal. Well then, I will tell ye now. Give me firſt a glaſs of ſherris. (*Drinks*) You muſt know that, after the king (hang him for a ſheep-ſtealing cur) gave me that rebuff I told you of; he ſtalk'd majeſtically away, and left me to the mercy of the multitude: when, as I ſtood parleying with mine antient; mine arms a-kembo thus; a knot of elbowing carls bore me down before them, with the impetuoſity of a torrent. Lo! there was I, jamm'd faſt in the midſt of a vile groupe of mechanics, as if we had grown together in a body corporate: and in this jeopardy was I carried along; ſometimes bolſter'd up on all ſides, at the confluence of ſeveral turnings, like a May-pole; and at others, wire-drawn between two ſtone walls, as if they meant to make chitterlings of me: now this fair round belly taking the form of a Chriſtmas-pye, and by and by preſs'd as flat as a pancake. It is a miracle I did not burſt in the midſt of them. Had it not been for the ſufficiency of my buff doublet, I ſhould have certainly burſted.

Dol. If you had, Sir John, you would have went off with a report like a bladder.

Fal. A bladder, ye jade, a demi-culverin at leaſt. I ſhould have died an hero: my exit would have made ſome noiſe in the world.

Quick.

Quick. Heav'n forbid, Sir John, you ſhould ever die a virulent death, I ſay.

Dol. I hope, indeed, ſweet knight, you will never be preſs'd to death. That muſt be an odd end, and yet methinks I could bear much.

Fal. I'll be ſworn thou could'ſt, Dol: but thou art a woman, and made to bear.

Quick. Yes, in good ſooth, poor woman is made to bear ev'ry thing. She muſt ſuffer all a man's ill humours; let 'em lie never ſo heavy upon her: and, by my truly, ſome men are nothing elſe. But, to be ſure, Sir John, you was moſt unhumanly uſed. Would no body take pity upon you?

Fal. Pity! the moſt remorſeleſs raſcals! they made no more of me than if I had been a lump of dough, they were kneading to make dumplings of: and to expoſtulate with the villains, would have been preaching to the winds.

Dol. Why did not you exert your courage, Sir John? draw upon them?

Fal. Draw, ſayſt thou? I could not come at my rapier, to be maſter of a kingdom. And as for good words, in return for the few I gave them, they let fly their jeſts ſo thick at me, and pepper'd me ſo plaguly with ſmall wit, that I was dumbfounded.

Dol. I thought you could never have been overmatch'd that way, Sir John.

Fal. Yet ſo it was, Doll. They were holiday-wits, and came loaden with choke-pears: but, indeed, I was overpower'd by numbers. Two to one, Doll, you know—— They pelted me from all quarters. Will you hear? I will give you a ſpice of their ſarcaſms; a ſample of the gibing pellets they threw at me. As I was thus ſtemming the tide, and crying out for the lord's ſake, a dried eel's-ſkin of a fiſhmonger aſk'd me how I could complain of the cloud. "Is a porpoiſe ill at eaſe, ſaid he, amidſt a glut of ſprats and herrings?" I had not time to anſwer the whelp, before a barber-ſurgeon, the very model of the ſkeleton

leton in his glaſs-caſe, offered to tap me for the dropſy; and to make us all elbow-room by letting out a puncheon of canary, at my girdle. Right, cries a third, at the word canary, "I'll be hang'd if any thing be in the "doublet of that fat rogue but a hog's-ſkin of Spaniſh "wine;" and incontinently they roar'd out, on all ſides, "Tap him, there, —— tap him, maſter ſurgeon."—— 'Sblood; I was forc'd to draw in my horns, and be ſilent; leſt the villains, being thirſty, ſhould force the ſhaver to operation. The knave, indeed, was five weavers off, and ſo could not well come at me; I might otherwiſe have been drunk up alive.

Dol. And pray how cam'ſt thou off at laſt, Sir John?

Fal. By mere providence: for, after the barbarous raſcals had ſqueez'd the breath out of my body, they buffetted me becauſe I could not roar out, God ſave the king. At length, I know not how, they threw me down in the cloiſters, where, falling croſs-wiſe and the way being narrow, I fairly block'd up the paſſage: upon which (for they could not ſtraddle over me) they took another way (a plague go with them!) for fear of loſing the ſhow. And thus was I left to take in wind, and gather myſelf up at leiſure.

Dol. And did the mangy villains ſo play upon thy ſack but? a parcel of ſapleſs twigs! dry elms, fit only for fuel I would I had the burning of them.

Fal. Wouldſt thou fire them, Dol? Ha! art thou touch wood ſtill, Dol?

Dol. Nay, Sir John, not ſo.

Quick. No, I'll be ſworn, Sir John, to my carn knowledge, if there be truth or faith in medicine. B Sir John, what would your honour pleaſe to have f ſupper?

Fal. Another glaſs of ſherris — fill me out, Bardolp I cannot eat. I have loſt my appetite by the way. Put egg into a quart of mull'd ſack, and give it me when I a-bed. I will to ſleep.

Dol. Would you have your bed prepar'd, ſtrait, John?

Fal. Ay, on the inſtant, good Dol. Hoſteſs! go thou and ſee to the brewage of my ſack.

[*Exeunt* Dol. *and* Mrs. Quickly.

SCENE XI. Tavern continued.

Enter PISTOL and NYM.

Piſ. Sir Knight, I bring thee news: loud fame reports
My lord-chief-juſtice hath recall'd his warrants.

Fal. I would he were choaked with his warrants, ere he had iſſued them. But I thank thee for the tidings. The ſerjeants will not diſturb my reſt, at leaſt to-night. But, what comes here?

Piſ. From ducking-pond eſcaped in dripping plight,
The crooked-finger'd cut-purſe, Peto hight.

SCENE XII.

Enter PETO, leaning upon GADSHILL.

Fal. What's the matter, Peto?

Gad. Matter! Sir Knight and maſter of mine! Matter i'faith enough. The mob at Weſtminſter had like to have murder'd poor Peto here.

Fal. And how ſo?

Gad. Why, Sir John, as he was getting upon a cobler's bulk, to ſee what was become of your honour, a raw-bon'd ſwaggering ſerjeant, coming by, whipt hold of him by the leg, and threw him on the people's heads; where they ſhoulder'd him about from poſt to pillar, as they would have done a hedge-hog, or a dead rabbit that had been thrown among them. I faith, I thought they would have kill'd him.

Fal. How! was that Peto? I ſaw the buſtle at a diſtance, and

and wonder'd what the porters and 'prentices had got, to make ſport withal. By the Lord, Peto, I have a fellow-feeling for thy ſufferings.

Piſ. And I. But ſay, is merit thus repaid?
Shall fortune play the jilt with men of mould?
Go, Peto, lay thy head in Parco's lap.

Fal. Good Peto, let me adviſe thee to go to bed,
And lay thy head on a pillow. Bardolph, ſee to him.
Piſtol and Nym, good night.

Piſ. and *Nym.* Good night, Sir John.

Fal. Francis!
Light me to bed—let Dol bring up the ſack,
See to the urinals, and tuck up my back. [*Exit.*

Piſ. Signior Nymwego! Hear'ſt thou lad of craft?

Nym. Yea, marry, Don Anticho del Piſtolo—runs the humour well?

Piſ. Well, Nym. and thou and I, o'er cup and can,
Will go, and ſchemes of operation plan.

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Firſt ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I. A Street.

Enter Juſtice SHALLOW and Maſter SLENDER.

Slen. I Wonder now, Coz; when you know what a deſperate kind of a horrible man Sir John is, you ſhou'd ——

Shal. Tut, tut.—I fear him not; there's ne'er a Sir John Falſtaff in the nation ſhall over-reach me.

Slen. But what's done can't be help'd, Coz; he over-reach'd you now, as I take it, when you lent him the money.

Shal. Well, couſin of mine; then it is my turn now to over-reach him, and get it again.

Slen. That, indeed, couſin Shallow, to be ſure would be quite right; tit for tat, as we ſay in the country; but then he is ſuch a bloody-minded caitiff; you know he broke my head once for nothing at all: and if he ſhould get an inkling that you are going to law with him, O Lord, O Lord, I ſhall never ſleep in quiet again.

Shal. Poh, you chit, if he breaks the peace, I ſhall know what to do with him, I warrant ye.

Slen. Ay, there indeed, couſin, ecod, I did not think of that. If I am in fear of my life, I can anſwer taking him up with a warrant, and binding him over to his good behaviour. Suppoſe therefore, Coz, we ſwear the peace againſt him firſt, and lay him faſt by the heels before we enter the action.——And yet I don't know, if I might adviſe ye, I would waſh my hands of him.

Shal. Talk not to me. I tell thee I will ſpend half my eſtate, ere the raſcally knight ſhall carry it off ſo. I had rather the inns of court ſhould ſhare the money among

them, than that the gorbellied knave ſhould feaſt his enormous guts at any free-coſt of mine.—— I will to my council immediately; and if the law will not avail me, my ſword ſhall do me juſtice.

Slen. You know beſt, couſin Shallow, to be ſure; but ——

Shal. But me no buts, I ſay, but come along;
Your couſin Shallow puts up no ſuch wrong.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. A Street.

Enter an OFFICER of the King's Houſhold and a FRIAR.

Offic. There, good friar, thou haſt it: it would little conduce to raiſe the king's wiſdom in the general eſtimation of the world, to have it thought in the power of ſuch unworthy men as Falſtaff and his fellows, to lead him implicitly into all thoſe extravagances under which the character of his youth ſuffer'd: and yet ſo it would go near to be ſuſpected, if his highneſs ſhould now act towards them with an ill-timed ſeverity. My lord-chief-juſtice hath therefore retracted his haſty orders for their impriſonment.

Fri. Son, well obſerved; and I commend his lordſhip's prudence, in treating their vices as infirmities; and will readily undertake to commune with them on the grievous enormity of their diſſolute lives.

Offic. His lordſhip would have you apply firſt to Sir John Falſtaff, the ring-leader of this vicious troop. If you can diſpoſe him to good, the reſt may follow.

Fri. I will attend theſe reprobates, and uſe the means.

Offic. His lordſhip requires that you would bring Falſtaff over to retire to a monaſtery, if poſſible; that, being concealed from the eyes of the world, he may not daily remind it of what is paſt. Farewel, good father; I will ſee thee again at the Priory. [*Exit* officer.

SCENE

SCENE III. Street continued.

FRIAR, ſolus.

I will go; but I fear my miſſion will prove as fruitleſs as that of many other Apoſtles, ſent among Infidels. As there is no danger of martyrdom, however, I am content.——Perſuade Sir John Falſtaff to turn monk! could I work miracles, indeed, and, like St. Thomas, turn an Ethiop white, ſomething might be ſaid for it: but, as it is, I deſpair of converting an old deboſhee from two ſuch prevailing hereſies as the whore and the bottle. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. Tavern in Eaſtcheap.

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH.

Fal. Two ſound naps, of eight hours a-piece, have ſomething recruited me. Bardolph, my morning's whet. Is it prepar'd?

Bar. 'Tis here Sir John. [*Gives* Falſtaff *a tankard.*

Fal. Here's to our better fortune. [*Drinks.*

Bar. Ah, Sir John, I am afeard our fortune hath been at its higheſt flood. We have ſeen our beſt days.

Fal. So the world goes Bardolph. Up and down! But is it not hard now? I that have——but that's nothing. I hate boaſting. It is, however, well known what pains I have taken to make a man of that Hal. Nay, you yourſelf are privy to many the good offices I have done him. Before the younker knew me, he could not drink ſack; made conſcience of going to church on holidays; and bluſh'd like a ſcarlet cloak, at entering a bawdy-houſe. I inſtructed him in all the manly exerciſes. I was content to win his money, to teach him gaming: to get drunk myſelf to try to make him ſo. Nay, ſetting rotten limbs and dignity aſide, have I not even pimp'd for the baſhful rogue?

Such a prince of Wales! by my troth, I was aſham'd of him. Had it not been for me, the milk-ſop might have been crown'd before he had loſt his maiden-head.

Bar. And that would have been a pity, Sir John, to be ſure.

Fal. It was I firſt taught him to way-lay the true-man; for I knew him when he durſt not cry *ſtand* to a turkey-cock; nay, a gander, of the ordinary ſize of a green-gooſe, had it met him on a common, would have made him run for it. I went farther yet; and not only em-bolden'd his actions, but taught him the manly arts of converſation. In the ſtile military, for inſtance, or ſwear-ing.———

Bar. Sir John, I believe, there you forget yourſelf; the prince wanted no aſſiſtance of you in that; for when he was a little crack, he would ſwear ye as well as a man ſix foot high.

Fal. Right, Bardolph, you are right. I remember me; ſwearing indeed he knew: for, tho' but a king's ſon, he would, as thou ſay'ſt, rap out an oath like an emperor. But then for the quinteſſence of all elocution, the uſe of the hyperbole, vulgarly call'd lying; there I am a maſter, yet what a deal of pains it hath coſt me to teach Hal to lie; and all thrown away upon him. He would never do it roundly. He had no genius that way.

Bar. You know, Sir John, the prince never could away with lying. He us'd to ſay 'twas beneath a gentleman and a ſoldier.

Fal. Well, well, he will never ſhine in the recital of his own exploits as Xenophon, Cæſar, and I, have done.

Bar. Why, Sir John, to be ſure, you have done ſome-thing.

Fal. Something! the ſervices I have done him and his father are out of number. Methinks my behaviour, in the ever memorable action at Shrewſbury, ſhould make him bluſh at his ingratitude. Who kill'd Hotſpur? Did not I give him his death's wound in the thigh? Was it not I who took priſoner that fiery dragon Coleville? and that even alive! And am I thus requited? Is this the guerdo

guerdon of my great atchievements? Hang valour, I'll hack my ſword no more Thus has it ever been the fate of merit to be rewarded. Alcibiades and Belliſarius for that!

Bar. Ay, Sir John, they were tall fellows: they were ſadly us'd indeed: I have heard of them. But that was in king John's time, I think.

Fal. They were the Falſtaffs of antiquity, Bardolph.

Bar. Like enough, Sir John: they were before my time, to be ſure; though Piſtol told me, t'other day, that general Belliſarius was his god-father.

Fal. Piſtol is an ignorant braggard; an aſs: I have injur'd my dignity by aſſociating with raſcals, not worthy to wait at my heels. What tell'ſt thou me of Piſtol?

Bar. Nay, Sir John, I meant no harm. I do think you deſerve to be made a lord of indeed.

Fal. I expected nothing leſs, I can aſſure ye. And then, for my well-known œconomy, to have had the ſole management of the exchequer at leaſt.

Bar. And inſtead of that to be baniſh'd——

Fal. I know not if I heard the word baniſh. I was forbidden indeed to come near the king's perſon by ten miles; but I was not at that diſtance when thoſe injunctions were laid on me. Quere now (it might poſe a caſuiſt, let me tell ye) whether I am thereby injoin'd to march right out, ten miles an end; whether the negative, *not come*, amounts to the poſitive, *go*.——I will not underſtand it ſo; and, if that be my lord ch ef juſtice's conſtruction, by the Lord, I will put him to the trouble of carrying of me: I will be laid up with the gout ere I budge a foot.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, the king did ſay, baniſh.

Fal. Admit it: unleſs he means to reſide for ever in a place, and be in his own proper perſon as immoveable as a church, I hold my life on a damn'd precarious tenure. He muſt give me timely notice of his motions, that I may regulate mine accordingly; otherwiſe, if he be travelling my way, we may happen to encounter, and I get myſelf hang'd through inadvertency. I do not think it ſafe, therefore, to ſtir out of town, without more explicit orders. Give me another draught.

Bar.

Bar. The tankard is out, Sir John, Shall I replenish?

Fal. No. I'll toward St. Paul's: a gentle perambulation this morning may refreſh me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. A Street.

Enter Juſtice SHALLOW, Maſter SLENDER, and a LAWYER.

Shal. Well, maſter Pleadwell, are you ſtill of that opinion. If ſo, my money's gone?

Law. Indeed, I am ſtill of that opinion, juſtice Shallow.

Shal. What! how! that my money's gone?

Law. Nay, I know not that. I ſay, I am of opinion you ſhould have taken a bond, or obligation, at the time of lending it, friend Shallow. A thouſand pound on the bare word of a courtier; and that courtier Sir John Falſtaff! ne'er an alderman in the city of London would have lent a thouſand pence on ſuch ſecurity.

Slen. Oh, that ever a country 'ſquire ſhould have leſs wit than a city alderman!

Law. A thouſand pound, Mr. Shallow, is——

Shal. A thouſand pound. I know it is, maſter Pleadwell, I know it well. But pray now, is there no method in the law to recover it? He cannot have ſpent it yet: cannot we compel him to reſtitution? Arreſt him—arreſt him, Mr. Pleadwell.

Law. But, ſhould he deny the debt, how will you prove it? and who knows, on ſuch an emergency, what Sir John Falſtaff will not do?

Shal. Nay, he will lye: that's the truth on't.

Slen. Ay, Coz, and that moſt conſumedly too.

Shal. I can prove his receipt of the money.

Law. But the conditions, juſtice Shallow.—What have you to ſhew that he is engag'd to return it? and when?

Shal. Nothing: I was weak enough to lend it him on his bare word.

Slen.

Slen. Nay, couſin Shallow, not ſo neither. I'll be ſworn he borrow'd it upon his oath. He ſwore upon the honour of a true knight, to give him a thouſand pound again; and beſides that, the comings-in of a better thing, in his majeſty's court at London.

Law. Ah, Maſter Slender, theſe knights have juſt honour enough to ſwear by; but, for any thing further, I am apprehenſive we ſhall find him one of thoſe honourable knights, whoſe word is as good as their oath. But ſee, if I miſtake not, yonder he comes; this encounter may perhaps ſave us the trouble of attending him at home. Let us ſpeak him fair, and perſuade him, if poſſible, to ſign an obligation for the money. If we can do that, we may trounce him. Let me alone with him.

Slen. O would you could, Mr. Pleadwell! what would I give methinks to ſee him well trounc'd! if it was only for giving me once a bloody coxcomb.

SCENE VI. Street continued.

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. How! Maſter Shallow conſulting with his lawyer! are ye thereabouts, friend Shallow? would you hamper me with an action? *(Aſide.)* I will paſs them by. [*Going.*

Shal. Sir John, Sir John, a word with you, if you pleaſe.

Fal. O my good friends Robert Shallow, Eſq; and Maſter Slender! how fare ye gentlemen both?

Law. Sir John, Mr. Shallow here has——

Fal. Ha! what mine old acquaintance Maſter Wheedlepoint! how is it with your health, Maſter Wheedlepoint?

Law. Pleadwell is my name, Sir John.

Fal. Right.—I cry you mercy—Roundabout Pleadwell, think. My memory is not ſo retentive as——

Law.

Law. No offence, Sir John, that is not the caſe.

Fal. Marry but it is, Mr. Pleadwell; a treacherous memory is my great defect: and a miſnomer in law thou knoweſt——

Law. Would be matter of conſequence, Sir John. But that is not our buſineſs at preſent. Mr. Shallow here hath put a caſe.——

Fal. Ay, Maſter Shallow ſhould know ſomething of the law too. Was not he at Clement's inn when thou wert firſt enter'd there? That muſt be many years ago, Mr. Pleadwell.—Let me ſee. How many years ago muſt that be, Maſter Shallow?—Why you carry your age well, Mr. Pleadwell.

Shal. Pretty well, pretty well, Sir John, but that——

Fal. Nay marry, I ſay, very well, Maſter Shallow. And pray what is become of young Puzzlecauſe, and Dick Silvertongue, your fellow-ſtudents there? they were call'd to the bar, I ſuppoſe. That Dick was a prate-a-pace rogue? and a devil among the bona robas. He and Maſter Shallow here were two with the wenches. Ha, Maſter Shallow!

Shal. No matter, Sir John, at preſent we would confer on other buſineſs.

Fal. Nay, gentlemen, if ye are on buſineſs, I crave your pardon, and leave ye. I am not uſed to be impertinent,

Law. You are not going, Sir John; it is with you our buſineſs lies.

Fal. Buſineſs with me!

Shal. Yes, about the thouſand pound, Sir John.

Fal. What mean you, Maſter Shallow?

Shal. That you borrow'd of me, Sir John.

Slen. Yes, Sir John, the thouſand pound you borrow'd of my couſin Shallow, Sir John.

Fal. Take me with ye, gentlemen, both; let me underſtand ye. You preſented me, indeed, with a thouſand pound to promote your intereſt at court, Maſter Shallow; and may depend on it, if I can ſerve you—

Shal.

Shal. Fiddle, faddle, Sir John, I expect my money again: your intereſt at court is not worth a farthing.

Fal. I cannot help that; the more is my misfortune, Mr. Shallow; you ſee my heart is good.

Law. If ſo, Sir John, you will not refuſe to give Mr. Shallow ſomething to ſhew for his money, under your hand.

Fal. How doſt thou know that, Mr. Pleadwell? I muſt conſult my counſel in this caſe.

Law. There is no need, Sir John; I will draw up a little inſtrument, to which thou wilt ſet thy hand immediately.

Fal. Not while I have a head; Maſter Pleadwell, I like not running hand over head in theſe matters. By latter Lammas, or St. Falſtaff's day, I may perhaps bethink me.

Law. I know of no ſaint of thy family in the kalendar, Sir John.

Fal. Well, well, there may be ſaints of a worſe. Our merit hath not ſtood in the way of promotion; that's all: and yet there are as many whoremaſters there as lawyers, I believe. But I cannot tarry now to hold farther queſtion with thee; fatigued as I am, and earneſt to reach my lodgings yonder.

Law. If thou wilt there ſign the inſtrument, Sir John, we will attend you thither.

Fal. Wilt thou? it is a notorious bawdy-houſe.

Law. No matter, Sir John.

Fal. No matter, ſayſt thou? Is it then no matter for one of the grave ſages of the law to be ſeen in a public bawdy-houſe? Lord, Lord, what will this world come to! My conſcience, however, is more tender: I ſhould be ſorry to give ſuch occaſion of ſcandal.

Law. Pleaſe you, Sir John, to be ſerious. Let us rightly underſtand each other.

Fal. With all my heart, good Maſter Pleadwell; then, to be plain with you, I find you do not know me. You talk to me of reſtitution and conditions; did'ſt thou ever know Sir John Falſtaff make reſtitution on any condi-

tions? And doſt thou think me ſo unpractis'd a courtier as to return the perquiſites of my calling, becauſe I am turn'd out; or to reſtore the purchaſe of my good-will, becauſe I am not likely to get in. What take ye me for a younker? a geck? Go to—you cannot play upon me.—Maſter Shallow, reſt you content: your money is in good hands; and, if I do not ſpend it like a gentleman, never truſt me with a thouſand pound again.

Shal. Oh! that I ever did truſt ſuch a caitiff!

Law. But, pray, were theſe the conditions, Mr. Shallow? Was you to be repaid by a place at court?

Slen. To be ſure. Why what do you think. Mr. Pleadwell, couſin Shallow was fool enough to lend a thouſand pound for nothing? Why, I, myſelf, was to be made a great man too; and that into the bargain.

Shal. Couſin Slender, ſpeak in your turn, I pray you.

Law. Were theſe terms ſpecified?

Fal. Not indeed on parchment, *ſignatum & ſigillatum*, Mr. Pleadwell. A courtier's promiſe is not, indeed, very good in law. But I can tell ye the poſts I ſhould have procur'd for theſe noble 'ſquires: and by'r lady, thou wilt ſay they would have been well occupied. Having a little pique or ſo at my Lord-chief-juſtice, and Mr. Shallow, here, thinking himſelf qualified, I promis'd him my intereſt for his worſhip's removal from the quorum to his lordſhip's place on the bench. Was it not ſo, Mr. Shallow?

Shal. Don't belye me, Sir John, don't cheat me of my money, and laugh at me too. Robert Shallow eſquire will not put up with that.

Fal. Then for Mr. Slender here, I purpos'd, for his addreſs and elocution, to have got him appointed orator to the houſe of parliament; or otherwiſe, in conſideration of his figure and magnanimity, to have made him a ſtaff officer, or captain of horſe, at the leaſt.

Slen. Nay, Sir John, you did not tell me what; but I expected ſome notable place, I'll aſſure ye: for I look upon myſelf, plain 'ſquire as I ſtand here, to be ſomebody.

Shal.

Shal. Coz, coz, you are an aſs, coz.

Slen. Why, why, I didn't lend him the money; I.

Law. Juſtice Shallow, this is a very ſimple affair. I am ſorry it is not in my power to ſerve you in it. Sir John, if you had either honour or honeſty, you would reſtore the money; but, as you make pretenſions to neither, I leave you. [*Exit* Lawyer.

SCENE VII. Street continued.

FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, and SLENDER.

Fal. Well, my maſters, you hear the counſel learned in the law. Will you to dinner with me? You ſhall ſee I am no niggard. If you will lodge with me in Eaſtcheap, you ſhall ſee the thouſand pound fairly ſpent in ſack: you ſhall ſhare with me to the utmoſt farthing. But for dry reſtitution, I have not been accuſtom'd to it of many years. You would not have me a changeling at this time of day, I hope, Maſter Shallow.

Shal. Changeling! no, Sir John, thou art no changeling; but, depend on it, I will not put up this wrong. Robert Shallow, eſq; will neither eat nor drink with thee. If the law will not help me, I will take other methods. I will have my money; depend on't I will have my money. [*Exit* Shallow.

Slen. Ay, ay, we ſhall find means to get the money; never fear. [*Exit* Slender.

SCENE VIII. Street continued.

FALSTAFF, ſolus.

Nay, I fear it not — at leaſt before I ſhall have found means to ſpend it: and then, get it who may; it concerns not me. We ſhall ſee, however, whoſe buſineſs will be

done firſt. Mine will go merrily forward. Ah! ſhallow Maſter Shallow! But who could have thought the ſnipe would have went to counſel, to get himſelf laugh'd at? Then to ſee how demurely Sir Slyboots angled for me, as if I had been a gudgeon! How cunningly the raſcally barrador would have hook'd me on his inſtrument! But I was even with the methodical knave. — My friend Shallow will never bring it to bear an action at law; and if he ſhould, I am on the right ſide of the hedge. Indeed, were I to go to law for a mint of money, I would chuſe to have it all in my poſſeſſion. There is nothing like it. Poſſeſſion is the very life's blood of a bad cauſe: on the ſtrength of which in mine, I will home to dinner.

SCENE IX. A fencing ſchool.

Enter PISTOL and NYM diſguiſed.

Piſtol. Is this not better than the ſervice mean
Of Cappadocian or Aſſyrian knight?
That laſt young quarreller, how much gave he?

Nym. Two marks for entrance and an angel fee.

Piſtol. 'Tis well, keep 'count; and lend attention mute.
Dame Urſula, the knight's neglected flame,
Grown rich, is fond of finery and name;
To her hath Don Piſtolo made his ſuit
By love-epiſtle. — Nym — What ſayſt thou to't?

Nym. What, rival Sir John! 'Tis true he does not go there now, or he'd make a bloody buſineſs of it. You muſt know I've courted her neice and chambermaid Bridget ever ſince the laſt wind-fall.

Piſtol. And haſt thou ſped?

Nym. Very ſcurvily, ancient. The jade runs her humours upon me.

Piſtol. Nym, I a letter for thee will indite,
In the true ſtile of a Caſtilian knight.
Woman is taken by mere words and whim;
Nymwego ſhall command what's held from Nym.
But ſee new ſwaggerers coming——keep your ſtate.

SCENE

SCENE X.

Enter Juſtice SHALLOW and Maſter SLENDER.

Shal. Ay, this is my old ſchool: here have I had my ſa! and my ha!——Odſo, your ſervant, gentles, pray is Signior Stiletto to be ſpoken with?

Piſtol. The valiant wight tranſlated is to heaven.

Shal. Faith and troth, I'm ſorry for that; heartily ſorry indeed.

Piſtol. Ha! ſorry! ſayſt thou, Paphlagonian vile?
Wouldſt thou in Tartarus that he ſhould howl?
Ha!——Ha!

[*Draws and makes a lunge at Shallow, who retires.*

Shal. Not I.——Not I.——Pray moderate your paſſion.——Gad's mercy on me what a furious lunge!——Sir, underſtand me. Signior Stiletto was my honoured maſter. I had a friendſhip for him.

Piſtol. I then embrace thee with a ſoldier's arm.
Stiletto was the glory of the ſword,
The Ajax, Hector, Agamemnon, he!

Shal. And, if I may aſk without offence, pray Sir, what is the name and quality of your worſhip?

Piſtol. I his ſucceſſor am, and men me call
Anticho del Piſtolo.

Shal. A name of ſound, and ſmacking loud of valour; it ſorts well with your figure and profeſſion.

Slen. Ecod I think ſo; his name and looks I'm ſure make me tremble. I would I were ſafely out of the houſe, la!

Piſtol. Needſt thou my ſervice?

Shal. To ſay the truth, Sir, tho' I am not of a quarrelſome diſpoſition, I have an affair of the ſword upon my hands; and, having long laid by my rapier, I came to take a leſſon or two of Signior Stiletto; the better to withſtand the force of my adverſary. Now, ſince my old

maſter is dead, I would be obliged to the ſkill of his ſucceſſor.

Piſtol. What is thy name and quality?

Shal. My name is Shallow, Sir.

Slen. Of Glouceſterſhire, eſq; juſtice of the peace and of the quorum.

Piſtol. A name of note, and ſmacking much of folly. [*Aſide.*

It ſuiteth well thy figure and thy purpoſe.
Nymwego, hand the foils. There, graſp it well;
Bear thy point thus againſt thy rival's ſword,
And had he twenty lives, he falls. Sa —— Sa.

[*They ſkirmiſh and* Shallow *is diſarmed.*

Shal. Enough, enough, for once brave Sir, enough.
I ſee, indeed, you're worſhip is a maſter.
Another time I'll try my ſkill again.

Piſtol. Enough's a feaſt. Farewel, till next we meet.

[*Exit* Piſtol.

SCENE XI.

Nym. And will not my young 'Squire here enter into the humour of it. Come, Sir, lay hold.

Slen. Cod ſo, not I. I quarrel with no body but my man. And I can break his head at any time for Sixpence. So, I've no occaſion, Sir, I thank ye. —— Come, Coz, let's go.

Shal. Sir, there's my thanks (*gives money to* Nym) you'll ſee me ſoon again.

Slen. Yes, yes, my couſin will come again; but I've no occaſion I thank ye. [*Exeunt* Shallow *and* Slender.

SCENE

SCENE XII.

NYM, ſolus.

Theſe two 'Squires are precious ſubjects to play humours on.——I have it too: they've land and beeves; and marry-trap, I will lay a trap for marrying them. Our hoſteſs Quickly and Dol. Tearſheet, when bedizen'd, may paſs on theſe Glouceſterſhire oafs for London dames of rank. Nay, they reſemble the wealthy widow of Watling-ſtreet, and buxom Beatrice of Bucklerſbury, her forward niece. This were a trick of price: I'll faſhion it, by working up theſe noodles into a conceit of their being beloved by the widow and madam Beatrice. I will about it ſtrait. [*Exit.*

End of the Second ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. Tavern in Eaſtcheap.

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH.

Fal. BARDOLPH! How is it with Peto to day!

Bar. Why, he's in a bad way, Sir John.

Fal. That all! —— when was he otherwiſe? who ever knew Peto or thee in a good way?

Bar. And yet, Sir John, we are your followers, you know.

Fal. Well ſaid, Bardolph. — I ſee thy wit is improv'd. I lead you the way, it is true; but you follow me, like ſpaniels, with damnable circumvolutions. But, whom have we here?

Bar. It is the doctor, Sir John, that has been up to ſee Peto.

Fal. O, doctor Caius Mithridate, the apothecary! a precious limb of Galen! — At Windſor he was a phyſician, and ſtarved by preſcribing poiſons, but now he is turned apothecary, and thrives by adminiſtering them.

SCENE II.

Enter Dr. CAIUS.

Fal. So, maſter Doctor, thou art a man of merit, I ſee. —— Thou art ſought after. —— Pray, how many patients may'ſt thou have diſpatched to day?

Caius. Pas beaucoup, Sir John —— not great many. I pay viſit betimes, en bon matin, a monſieur de Peto. — But I muſt go now a l'inſtant, a la cour.

Fa

Fal. Nay, reſt you a moment, Dr. Caius, I would commune with you a little on the ſcore of old acquaintance. Pray, maſter doctor, how came you to leave Windſor? You were, I thought, in ſome repute there.

Caius. How came I to leave Windſor! By gar dat Windſor did leave me. —— Repute! Morbleu, I was in de beſt reputation du monde. In dree year, dare vas no leſs dan dree honderd patients of quality under my hands. ——They did never complain of mal-treatment: and yet I did ſtay dere till I had no patients left.

Fal. Dead men tell no tales, Doctor, 'tis certain.

Caius. Eh, bien! my patients did die ſure enough; but dere was deir ſons, deir daughters, deir couſin-germans; dey was alive, and commend my treatment of de defunct et non obſtant they never would call me in demſelves.

Fal. That's much.——But did all your patients die? Say you? Not one ſurvive to trumpet the fame of their doctor!

Caius. Yes, by gar, dere vas one Bourgeois fort riche et fort mal: he bring me more diſgrace than all doſe dat vas dead. I did exert all my ſkill for two, dree year; and he would not be cured.

Fal. Then why did you not let him go after the reſt?

Caius. By gar he would not go. Il a ètè fort entetè, cet homme la. I ave give him opiates, de narcotiques, ſtronger by gar dan Lethe itſelf. But he would not be compoſed; he would live to diſgrace me. So he turn me off; and grew well himſelf, bientôt, preſently, without any medicine in the world.

Fal. A baſe Plebeian tyke!

Caius. By gar, he vas one baſe fellow, let me tell you dat. De quality no put ſuch affront upon practitioner renommé, un homme comme moi.

Fal. Right, maſter Caius; it is a damned thing when people will not die ſecundum artem; but live in ſpite of the doctor. But to the preſent concern, how is it with Peto?

Caius. Oh! j'eſpere qu'il ſeroit beintôt gueri; he is in very fair way, Sir John.

Fal. Bardolph tells me here, he is in a bad one; fair and good, I have heard often; but fair and bad, ſeldom. But what are his complaints, maſter doctor? I know ſomething of phyſick.

Caius. Vy, Sir John, de cutis of de occiput eſt laceré: there be gros tumours all over de corps, de body. De patient has a delire, a vertigo; and beſides, de ſymptomes febriles, de pouls indicate phlebotomy.

Fal. Phlebotomy! What bleeding?

Caius. A leetel, Sir John — ve vill take avay but ſixteen ounces, for un petit revulſion.

Fal. Sixteen ounces! Haſt thou a deſign upon his life? What, a plague, wouldſt thou kill him? He doth not weigh four pounds averdupoize, fleſh, bones and all; and thou would'ſt take him away by quarterns, in a ſlop-baſon.

Caius. Vat is dat, Sir John? vill you inſtruct me in de patologie, de therapeutice, de indications et contra-indications? Monſieur Peto, muſt be bled.

Fal. Bleed ſick apes and hypp'd monkies. If Peto be not hang'd, he ſhall die a natural death. Thinkeſt thou I'll have his veins drained to fill a row of porringers in a barber's ſhop-window! uſe bits of red cloth and be damn'd: ye ſhall have the blood of no follower of mine. Sixteen ounces! I tell thee, not Galen, Hippocrates, nor Eſculapius himſelf, were they alive, ſhould thus operate upon him. Phlebotomy! I will phlebotomize ye all with my rapier, by the Lord, if you offer to draw a lancet on him.

Caius. Eh bien donc, Sir John; be not in one paſſion; ve vill take little leſs; but, by gar de patient vill die, if he no be bled. And let me tell you, Sir John, you vould do vell to loſe little blood. En verité vous êtes trop phletorique.

Fal. Me! I thank thee. But, in the blood is the life of the creature; and I will not conſent to part with mine.

Caius. Il ſeroit mieux auſſi: it would be better, Sir John, you mix little more vater in your wine.

Fal. More water! I mix none.

Caius. Vorſe and vorſe! By gar, Sir John, if you no

ſhange

ſhange your regime, you ſhall die. Your fat vill eat you up.

Fal. I ſhall eat up many a fat capon firſt, maſter doctor.—But would'ſt thou perſuade me, with thy contra-indications, that water is better than wine?

Caius. Pour quelques temperamens et dans certains cas; for ſome conſtitutions and in ſome caſes, Sir John.

Fal. For thine, perhaps, but mine thanks thee for thy water. Wine is good enough for me.

Caius. Ah! que vous êtes mal avilé. Eh bien, Sir John, you will no take my advice, I leave you. Bon jour—good day to you, Sir John.

(Aſide.) Eh! mon dieu! ſi gras! ſi gros, by gar, he cannot live long; he will overlay his own belly and burſt, if he be not bled. [*Exit Dr.* Caius.

SCENE III.

Fal. Good day to you, maſter doctor apothecary. And yet I know not whether I ought to wiſh that neither; for a good day to him muſt be a bad one to ſome-body. A man of any conſcience, or humanity, knows not how to ſalute fellows of ſuch an occupation: for who would wiſh the reſt of mankind lame and blind, ſick and ſorry, to find them employment, forſooth?—Poor Peto! I would not loſe him, methinks; for, tho' he be a worthleſs knave, he is an old acquaintance; and I never could find in my heart to part with my old acquaintance merely becauſe they were good for nothing. King Hal is another ſort of a man to what I am, to abandon his old friends in his proſperity thus. Poor Peto!

Bar. Ecod, Sir John, it happen'd lucky for me, I can tell ye, that I came off ſo well as I did yeſterday.

Fal. Ay, by'r lady, thou playd'ſt fair to get off in a whole ſkin, and leave thy friend and maſter in extremity.

Bar. Nay, 'pon honour, Sir John, I did my utmoſt

to keep up with you: but 'twas unpoſſible; and indeed it was very fortunable that I was not myſelf trod to death by the populous.

Fal. Thou! tell me the moon is a Suffolk cheeſe, or a Windſor pear. Thou! have I not ſeen thee clear the ring without a ſtaff, at a bear-baiting? Thou might'ſt make thy way through a legion, nay the millions of a croiſade: why, who would come within a fathom of that fire-brand, thy noſe? It is a flaming two-edged ſword. Wouldſt thou make me believe the villains would come near thee, to burn their holiday cloaths? Thou wouldſt have ſet them a-blaz'ng like ſtubble, and have conſumed the whole proceſſion of heralds, like men of ſtraw. A plague upon them, it was by their avoiding thee, I ſuppoſe, that I had like to have died a martyr to corpulency.

Bar. Sir John, you are always plaguing me about my face; what would you have me do with it?

Fal. Do with it! If there were water enough in the Thames, I would have thee quench it. But water, I fear, can do nothing for thee; ſince I remember, when we rode laſt from Canterbury, when the rain beating full in our faces, thou cam'ſt into the Borough with thy noſe and cheeks glowing red-hot, although they had been hiſſing all the way like a tailor's goeſe. God forgive me—but when thou runn'ſt behind the hedge, in fear of the officer; I could not help comparing him and thee to Moſes and the burning-buſh. But thou wilt in time be conſumed: thy fire muſt out.

Bar. I would it were out, ſo be I might hear no more on't. In troth, Sir John, if I muſt always be your butt, I ſhall ſeek another ſervice I aſſure you.

Fal. Nay, nay, good Bardolph, that muſt not be. I ſpeak not in diſparagement, heav'n knows: for I mean to cheriſh thee againſt the lack of fuel, or the viſitation of a Dutch winter.

Bar. 'Sblood, Sir John, I'll bear it no longer.

[*Going.*

Fal. Hold, Bardolph, where art thou going? thou glow-

glow-worm in magnature with thy tail upwards; thou pumpion-headed raſcal, ſtay, or——

Bar. Give me good words then, Sir John. Why pumkin-head, pray now?

Fal. Haſt thou never ſeen a ſcoop'd pumpion ſet over a candle's-end, on a gate poſt, to frighten ale wives from goſſiping by owl-light? That is a type of thee——that is thy emblem: thy head being hollow, full of light, and eaſily broken; as thou ſhalt experience, if thou offer'ſt to fly thy colours till diſbanded by authority. I ſhall need thee, I tell thee, to keep me warm under the coldneſs of the king's diſpleaſure.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, burnt ſack and ginger will do you more good: for whatſomever light I may give, I am ſure, ſet aſide choler, I am as cold as e'er a white-liver'd younker in town.

Fal. Cold, ſayſt thou! thy face would condemn thee for an incendiary before any bench of judicature in the kingdom! thou wouldſt carry apparent combuſtibles into court with thee. Tell not me of cold. Thou wouldſt certainly have been hang'd long ago, had not the ſheriff been afraid thou wouldſt have fir'd the hangman or the gibbet.

Bar. Why, Sir John, I have been your attendant off and on theſe twenty years, come Candlemas; and I don't find I have had any ſuch effect on you.

Fal. The cauſe, you rogue, the cauſe; am not I oblig'd to keep a pipe of Canary conſtantly diſcharging on me? Are not the tapſters perpetually employed? the ſack-buckets for ever a going, to keep me from blazing? And yet at times my ſkin is ſhrivell'd up like an April pippin. Mark me but walking an hundred paces, with thee glowing at my heels, if I do not broil and drip like a roaſting ox.

Bar. Ah, you are pleaſed to be hard upon me, Sir John, but I am ſure my face never hurt a hair of your head.

Fal. No! look at 'em—hath it not turn'd them all

grey? Twenty years ago, before they were calcin'd by thy fire, my locks were of a nut-brown.

Bar. Why, you grow old, Sir John.

Fal. Old! what call ye old? I am a little more than threeſcore: and Methuſalem liv'd to near a thouſand. Why may not I be a patriarch, and beget ſons and daughters theſe hundred years, myſelf?

Bar. Then you muſt get a wife, Sir John, for your common fields, you know, never bear clover.

Fal. Marry! what to be made a cuckold of, I warrant ye?

Bar. Why, Sir John, if you ſhould marry, you would not like to be ſingular, I ſuppoſe.

Fal. Nay, for the matter of that, all's one: but who will have me? Your dames of breeding are too fine and finicking for me to bear with them.

Bar. Ay, or for them to bear you either, Sir John.

Fal. Nay, whoever has me, ſhe muſt be no tenderling; ſhe muſt be none of your gingerbread laſſes, that will crumble to pieces in the towzling. She muſt be none of your wiſhy-waſhy, panada gentry neither; your curd and whey gentlefolks, that cannot ſupport the embraces of a ſoldier, I muſt have a kickſy-wickſey of more ſubſtantial ſtuff.

Bar. Why, Sir John, what ſay you to Madam Urſula, your old ſweetheart? You have courted her to my knowledge theſe twenty years laſt paſt. I ſuppoſe you know her great aunt is dead, and has left her four hundred marks a year.

Fal. No, by the lord, I heard nothing on't. She ſent me a letter, indeed, into Glouceſterſhire; but I was over a bottle, and would not interrupt the glaſs to read it. I knew it was hers by the ſuperſcription, which by the way, however, was as unintelligible as the hand-writing on the wall. It had never reached me had not the bearer been a decypherer. Go, Bardolph, and fetch it; you will find it among other trumpery in my cloak bag.

[*Exit* Bardolph.

SCENE

SCENE IV. Tavern continued.

FALSTAFF, ſolus.

Four hundred marks a year, quoth he! It were not an unreaſonable competence were not ſherries comparatively ſo dear. But if the female incumbrance on it ſhould turn out a ſhrew; the Lord have mercy on me, in thus paying off the ſins of my youth. Let me bethink me. Four hundred marks a year! I have, it is true, ſmall hopes from Hal; and ſhall grow old ſome time or other. Theſe aches in my limbs forebode it. I cannot hold out for ever; that's certain. Were it not good, therefore, to make a virtue of neceſſity, and take up while I am in caſe to reap the credit of reformation? Could I reconcile it to my intereſt, I believe my inclination would follow.

SCENE V. Tavern continued.

Re-enter BARDOLPH.

Bar. There, Sir John, is the letter.

Fal. Come on: let us ſee if we are maſter of ſo much Arabick as to find out our meaning. *(Reads)* Hum —— hum —— hum ——! Why, dame Urſula, thou haſt a memory. I could have credited thee for ſubtlety, on account of that old friend to woman, the ſerpent: but how thou couldſt remember for fifteen years together what money I owed thee — that indeed I cannot account for. I have myſelf forgot it long ſince. She tells me here, I have borrow'd five hundred pounds of her at times, as tokens of my love. By the Lord, and as I am a ſoldier, I will love her ſtill, and ſhe ſhall command ſemblable proofs of it. *(Reads on)* Hum —— hum —— Repayment of the money

or

or the performance of my engagements! Hoo! am I then to be married on compulſion? That will go moſt damnably againſt the grain. But hold ——if I marry, her money will be mine: if not, ſhe may ceaſe to lend when ſhe pleaſes: and the fortune of that man is always at the turning of the tide, who depends on the caprice of a woman.

Bar. Why, marry her, then, Sir John. I dare ſay ſhe has heard nothing of your diſgrace at court; ſo that ſhe won't ſtand upon terms.

Fal. Marry, Bardolph, and I am half reſolved to do ſo. Yea, by the Lord, and I will too. She has beſides two thouſand pounds in money, I will courageouſly make the attack and mount the breach of matrimony. If I fall into the hands of Philiſtines; why, good night. It is but going into purgatory a few years before my time. Bardolph, get me pen and ink, in the cupid. Thou ſhalt be one of love's meſſengers. —— I will write to her in trope and figure: metaphor and hyperbole carry all before them with the women. Let her reſiſt lyes and nonſenſe if ſhe can. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter NYM, DOL, and QUICKLY.

Dol. But do you think, *Nym*, they won't diſcover us?

Nym. Not if you mind the trick of it, and don't betray yourſelves. The old 'ſquire is as rampant as a goat, and conceited as an ape. And as for the young one, he has but four ſenſes out of the five. Let not your breath ſmell of aquavitæ, nor your lips ſmack of bawdry. Array yourſelves antique, look modeſt and ſpeak ſupernaculum. Do this, and they'll never ſuſpect you.

Quick. O, let me alone for ſpeaking ſupernaculum; I have a ſet of the courtlieſt phraſes in my huſwifry book! I'll con them by heart.

Nym.

Nym. Well, go, proſper; Piſtol will be here preſently.

Quick. Fear not —— we'll loſe no time: come, Dol, we ſhall be made women, if this plot ſucceeds.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE VII.

Dame URSULA and BRIDGET attending.

Urſ. And do you think, Bridget, Sir John will be at laſt as good as his word, then? How ſits my ruff to-day? I would thou hadſt bought me one of thoſe new-faſhioned farthingales.

Brid. O, madam, you are mighty fine, as it is, truly: and, I am ſure, Sir John can do nothing leſs than admire you.

Urſ. Thinkeſt thou ſo, Bridget? Why, to be certain, a peach-colour'd ſattin does become my complexion hugely. But I think the roſes are faded in my cheeks. Well, no matter: he might have gather'd them twenty years ago, had not he been a rover. I hope, however, he has ſold his wild oats now, and that I ſhall yet have the ſatisfaction to be called my lady Falſtaff.

Brid. To be ſure, madam; and tho' Sir John is but a knight at preſent, he will be very aſſuredly, now the young king is crown'd, be made a great lord, and may be a duke. Indeed, madam, I cannot think of leſs.

Urſ. And then ſhall I be a dutcheſs, Bridget. Dame Urſula a dutcheſs!

Brid. Ay, madam, that will be a day to ſee; if I am ſo happy as to be in your grace's favour.

Urſ. For certain, Bridget, thou ſhalt. Well, this love is a ſtrange thing! there is Sir John has deceived me a thouſand times, and yet, I know not how, he always perſuaded me he was ſincere.

Brid. A ſure ſign you lov'd him, madam.

Urſ. And yet to be ſure, before I receiv'd his letter, I thought I never ſhould hear from him again, and had almoſt come to a reſolution to caſt him entirely off.

Brid. In good ſooth, madam, that is very prudent; to caſt off a lover when we find he will leave us.

Urſ. I think ſo, and not a little imprudent to do it before, for one of my years at leaſt.

Brid. Why, madam, you are not ſo old.

Urſ. Indeed, but I am——old enough to know I ought not to part with one lover till I am ſure of another.

Brid. To be ſure, madam, a bird in the hand is worth two in the buſh; but the ſport of hampering the rogues, who are at liberty, is ſo vaſtly pretty.

Urſ. Ay, if we were ſure of catching them at laſt; but Bridget, Bridget, how often do they eſcape through our fingers and give us the ſlip! Beſides, it is for younger laſſes than I to go bird-catching——I cannot throw ſalt on the tail of a ſparrow now.

Bridg. Nay, ſay not ſo, madam; you forget your new lover, Don Anticho del Piſtolo.

Urſ. Hang him, fuſtian-pated rogue, whoever he be, to peſter me with his epiſtles.——To write letters for his comrade to thee too! well, as I live, I will expoſe this pair of bombards to Sir John. I will ſhew him their letters.

Brid. Madam, the knight is coming.

Urſ. Bleſs us, Bridget, and ſo he is. Introduce him and leave us.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Enter FALSAFF.

Fal. Well, my fair princeſs, ſee thy wand'ring knight.

Urſ. Welcome to London, Sir John; thou art indeed a wanderer.

Fal. A true knight-errant for thy ſake.

Urſ. For my ſake, Sir John?

Fal. Ay, for thine, my Helen. Have I not encounter'd tremendous giants and fiery dragons, in the rebels of Northumberland and Wales? And then for magicians and enchanted caſtles: Owen Glandower and his Welch devils we put to the rout; and many a ſtrong-hold between here and Weſt-Cheſter have I viſited, releaſing fair damſels and diſtreſſed 'ſquires from captivity. I brought two of the latter up to town; I would they were ſafely immur'd in the country again.

Urſ. And all theſe exploits for me, Sir John.

Fal. As I am a true knight, to lay my laurels at thy feet.

Urſ. Do you then ſtill love me in ſincerity, Sir John?

Fal. Do I love thee? Am I a ſoldier? Have I courage? Love thee; I will be thy Troilus, and thou ſhalt be my Creſſida.

Urſ. You have long told me ſo, indeed.

Fal. And can I lye? Thou ſhalt be ſole poſſeſſor of my perſon and wealth. Thou ſhalt ſhare in the honours done me at the court of the new king. Thou ſhalt —— but what ſhalt thou not do? We will be married incontinently.

Urſ. O, Sir John, you know your own power, and our ſex's weakneſs: but indeed for decency I cannot ſo ſpeedily conſent. Beſides, Sir John, I am not yet put into poſſeſſion of my eſtate and monies.

Fal. Nay then, as thou ſayſt, love, for decency's ſake,

we muſt bear with a ſhort delay: but I will no longer be kept out of poſſeſſion than thou art.

Urſ. You ſhall not, Sir John; and, in the mean time, our lawyers ſhall confer on the terms of our marriage.

Fal. I hate lawyers. Let a prieſt ſuffice. Am not I a man of honour?

To do thee leſs than juſtice were a ſin,
Give me thy lips, we'll ſettle all within.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE I. A Chamber.

Enter Juſtice SHALLOW and Mrs. QUICKLY, dreſſed in tawdry cloaths.

Quick. NAY, forſooth, Mr. Shallow, I am too young a widow; much too young to think of a ſecond huſband.

Shal. Not ſo, fair miſtreſs. If to wed be good, the ſooner married ſtill the better ſped. My aſſiduities will make you ſoon forget your former ſpouſe.

Quick. Your acidities, indeed, are very great, Mr. Shallow. But you are too preſſing: I cannot ſo ſoon forget poor Quickly.——*What the goujeres have I ſaid?*

Shal. Quickly!—I thought your huſband name was—

Quick. Yes, yes, and ſo it was; but I called him always Quickly, becauſe he was ever ſo ſlow. He died, poor man, of a ſlow melancholy. Always aſleep! night and day aſleep!

Shal. Hah! addicted to ſomnolency.

Quick. Ay, ſo the doctors ſaid. He died of a ſolemnity, and a ſolemn end, I warrant ye, he made of it.

Shal. He was too fat and corpulent perhaps; I am leaner.

Quick. Yes, Sir, he grew fat and burſtened, by ſotting with his gueſts, inſtead of minding the main chance and ſcoring double.

Shal. Say you? Miſtreſs!——

Quick. Bliſters on my nimble tongue. I ſay, Mr. Shallow, he was rich, and keeping open houſe, had ſtore of gueſts, that made a world of trouble.

Shal. Open houſe, and leave ſo much behind him: that is rare! he traded greatly?

Quick.

Quick. Greatly, Mr. Shallow.

Shal. And bore arms.

Quick. Two pumpions on a cucumber bed.

Shal. They will quarter.—I'll ſettle on thee fairly, widow.

Quick. Will you, Mr. Shallow?

Shal. Ecod, I will. Ay, twice as much for ſuch another ſmile. Odds heart, that look ſhot through me like an arrow. Nay, I will kiſs thee, ſackins will I ——

[*They ſtruggle*; Shallow *kiſſes her, and ſhe breaks from him in affected anger.*

Odds bods! a dainty widow!

Quick. You're rude, Sir, I muſt leave you. [*Exit.*

Shal. Hah! gone! then Shallow ſhall not ſtay behind,
But will purſue and force her to be kind. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter Mr. SLENDER and DOL TEARSHEET.

Slend. Sings,

Slender and tender
And no mere pretender.

Ha! ſaid I well, Mrs. Beatrice?

Dol. Ay, and ſung well too, Sir.

Slend. Nay, I have a ſweet breath, to ſing with: that's the truth of it. And yet I warrant you did not know I could ſing ſo well, when you firſt fell in love with me.

Dol. Oh, fy, Mr. Slender. You make me bluſh. Young maidens ſhould not be told ſo, tho' it were true. But, pray, where learnt you now that I was in love with you? Who told you this?

Slend. Marry, that did my uncle Shadow's fencing maſter, the Don with the hard name. I ſhould otherwiſe have bluſhed more by half than you. Hang me if you had caught me at falling in love firſt. But one good turn deſerves another, as we ſay in the country.

Dol. To be ſure, Mr. Slender hath parts.

Slend. Marry, would I might be hanged elſe. Why, do you

you know, that I have had maidens in love with me twice and once before now.

Dol. In the country belike.

Slend. Yea, verily, there was Mrs. Anne Page of Windſor, would have given, I warrant ye, more than I wot of, to be married to me.

Dol. And you would not have her.

Slend. Yes, I would have had her then; but I know not how, they cozened me, and married me to a great lubberly boy.

Dol. To a boy!

Slend. Yes, la! but, for that trick, if ever I marry any body again, I'll take care they don't wear does-ſkin breeches under their petticoats; that I will.

Dol. Ha! ha! ha!

Slend. Nay, it was no ſuch laughing matter that I know of.

Dol. Ha! ha! ha!

Slend. Ecod, if you laugh ſo at me, handſome as you are, I'll go and tell my uncle; ſo I will. [*Exit.*

Dol. Go thy way, with God's bleſſing, for a fool; were it not for thy wealth, Doll Tearſheet would not follow thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. Tavern in Eaſtcheap.

Enter FALSTAFF, laughing.

Don Anticho del Piſtolo! what a bombaſt rogue it is! I knew his hand writing, the moment I ſaw it. But I have put a ſpike into the wheel of his contrivance. Dame Urſula and her maid have given theſe raſcals encouragement. If they bite; the ſcoundrels will be hooked.

Enter FRANCIS.

Fra. Sir John, here is the hobbling friar, that has been ſo often to aſk for you. Shall I ſay you are at home?

Fal. Ay, let him in.—What can the gouty preciſian want with me?

SCENE IV.

Enter FRIAR.

Fr. Peace be with you. Sir John, God ſave ye.

Fal. Thank thee good father. What is your reverence's will.

Fr. I think thou doſt not know me, Sir John. It is indeed many years ſince our perſonal intimacy: your way of life and mine ——

Fal. Were ſomething different, father, to be ſure: and tho' I may have ſeen you before, it is ſo long ſince I have been at ſhrift, that I muſt crave your pardon if I have totally forgot you. And yet your reverence may be my ghoſtly father, for ought I know.

Fr. Fy, fy, Sir John, a man of your age and gravity.

Fal. Hoh! if your buſineſs be to chide me, I ſhut mine ears.

Fr. If you will not admit your wound to be prob'd; how can you expect to be cured, Sir John?

Fal. Cur'd! 'ſblood, I took thee for a prieſt, and I find thou art a ſurgeon.

Fr. A ſpiritual one, Sir John; and ſuch as your diſorder requires.

Fal. Doſt thou know my caſe then? A ſpiritual ſurgeon ſayſt thou? I am not given over by the ſurgeons bodily yet. Who call in the divine till they have ſent out the doctor?

Fr. I know your caſe well, Sir John. It is perhaps leſs your body than your mind that is infected.

Fal. Nay, like enough. I have indeed been damnably diſpirited ever ſince the king's coronation. A confounded melancholy hangs upon me like a quotidian ague.

Fr. It is that melancholy, and the cauſe of it, Sir John, I would remove.

Fal. And how wouldſt thou remove it? By providing me

me with a charge of horſe, and reſtoring me to the king's favour. I know no other way.

Fr. By inducing thee to repent, and be reſtor'd to the favour of the King of kings; which thou haſt forfeited by a diſſolute and abandoned life. Doſt thou not think thou art in a ſtate of reprobation?

Fal. Pray, friar, by what authority doſt thou take upon thee to catechiſe me? Doſt thou come out of mere charity, or art thou employ'd by thy ſuperiors?

Fr. Suppoſe the former, Sir John.

Fal. Suppoſe the former, father friar, why then the devil is ſo ſtrong in me, that I ſhould be tempted to throw thee headlong down ſtairs for thy charitable impertinence.

Fr. Thy ill-manners, Sir John, would be inexcuſable, were it not to be ſuppoſed the conſequence of an habitual antipathy to every thing that is good. But, I will not lay claim to greater merit than is my due. I am come by order of my Lord-chief-juſtice; who is ſo much your friend as to intereſt himſelf in your reformation.

Fal. My Lord-chief-juſtice! that's another matter. I cry thee mercy, reverend father. I find thou'rt not the man I took thee for. Your reverence does me honour; and I profeſs I am much indebted to his lordſhip's kind love and regard to my ſoul's health.

Fr. You'll hear me then, Sir John.

Fal. Yea, heav'n forbid I ſhould not —— what I ſaid was meant againſt thoſe officious zealots, who are ſo forward to pry into men's conſciences that will not bear the looking into.

Fr. Sir John, we know your failings; and ſhall not put you to the trouble of auricular confeſſion at preſent.

Fal. There, friar, thou winn'ſt my heart. Come ſit thee down. Wilt drink a glaſs of ſack?

Fr. I never do, Sir John.

Fal. I cry thee mercy, then. Here is to your reverence's health; and now, I'll tell thee what,—I do proteſt, I ſit me now upon the ſtool of repentance, and have been honeſtly deliberating, ſome time paſt, to change my courſe

of life. I am heartily tir'd of it. Indeed, I am, good father.

Fr. I am glad to find thee in ſuch promiſing diſpoſitions, and think thou couldſt not do better than to betake thyſelf, agreeable to his lordſhip's intentions, to ſome monaſtery, where thou wilt be ſecluded from temptations, and have all ſpiritual aſſiſtance to encourage thee to mortify the deſires of the fleſh.

Fal. Hold thee there, good father. Let me underſtand thee. What! would his lordſhip make a monk of me? I muſt there beg his pardon. A monk; and to mortify the fleſh! For heav'ns ſake, good father, conſider what a mortification indeed that muſt be to me, who have ſix times the quantity of any other man. If I muſt be included within the pale of the church, why not make a canon of me (not indeed a minor canon) but a prebendary, or a biſhop, now. Something might be ſaid for either of theſe. But for a monk! I know not any thing I am leſs fit for; unleſs indeed his lordſhip had meant to make a running footman of me.

Fr. Nay, Sir John, his lordſhip will not uſe compulſion in this. He will not ſo far lay a reſtraint on your inclinations.

Fal. O, if I ever find myſelf that way inclin'd; his lordſhip may depend on it I ſhall be as ready as ever to follow my inclinations. But the leſſon of lean and ſallow abſtinence is very long and hard, good father; I am not gotten half-way through the firſt chapter yet.

Fr. Some ſteps, however, Sir John, you muſt take, toward a more reputable way of life; and that ſpeedily too: otherwiſe you will be ſtript of the honours of knighthood; and the king's ſentence of baniſhment will be ſtrictly put into execution againſt you.

Fal. As to the matter of knighthood; once a knight and always a knight, you know. The king may make as many knights as he pleaſes; but he will not ſo eaſily unmake them again. My title will not depend on the king's courteſy, but on that of my followers. I am, notwithſtanding, very deſirous to give his lordſhip ſatisfaction:

faction: and do aſſure thee, on the honour of a ſoldier, of the ſincerity of my repentance.

Fr. And yet this may be only a tranſitory fit of penitence, owing to your late diſappointment. What reaſon canſt thou give me to hope this ſtate of mind will continue?

Fal. Why, father, what I am ſhortly going to do is an act, that has confin'd many a man to a ſtate of repentance, which hath continued to the laſt hour of his life.

Fr. This, Sir John, is ſaying ſomething. Pray what are you going to do?

Fal. I have taken a reſolution, father, to —— What doſt thou think now it is I have reſolv'd upon?

Fr. Some commendable act of penance, no doubt.

Fal. Nay, it may well be call'd ſo, I believe. I am determin'd, good father, to marry.

Fr. Call you that an act of penance, Sir John? Is marriage a ſtate of mortification?

Fal. I wiſh I may not find it ſo.

Fr. Well, Sir John, marriage is a holy ſtate; and in ſome degree I approve your reſolution; but, in the eſtimation of the church, it is alſo an holy act, and ought not to be enter'd into unadviſedly. Your repentance ſhould precede your receiving the benefit of that ſacrament.

Fal. O, doubt not but I ſhall repent me ſufficiently afterwards.

Fr. Ah! Sir John, Sir John, I fear me you are no true penitent: but, however, it may be lawful to ſalve what cannot be effectually cur'd. I did not expect to make a convert at the firſt interview. If thou takeſt any meaſures that tend toward reformation, thou ſhalt have my prayers and beſt aſſiſtance therein. Another time I will hold farther converſation with thee.

Fal. In the mean time, good father, let me ſtand fair in your report to my Lord-chief-juſtice and his majeſty.

Fr. Thou ſhalt ſtand fairer than I fear thou deſerveſt. Farewel. [*Exit* Friar.

SCENE V. Tavern continued.

FALSTAFF, ſolus.

Fare thee well, good father friar. What an hypocritical puritan! Would not drink ſack! Not with the ungodly I ſuppoſe. But I am damnably miſtaken, if he be not indebted for that roſy countenance and the gout, to the penetrating qualities of old ſherris.

SCENE VI.

Enter BARDODPH.

Fal. Well Bardolph, what news doſt thou bring?

Bar. Marry Sir John, I have juſt ſeen a ſight that you would have chuckled at.

Fal. And what is that?

Bar. Why, mother Quickly and Dol Tearſheet, attired like dames of faſhion, and courted by juſtice Shallow and maſter Slender. For my own part, I'm out of the plot; but if I find the contrivance is deep: the 'ſquires are caught. Piſtol and Nym are ſomehow at the bottom of it. That's all I can learn.

Fal. Bardolph, thoſe knaves would leave me, and ſet up for themſelves. The 'ſquires are mine; a lawful prey, and ſhall not be fed upon without our leave. Learn more, and I will bethink me how to counteract the villainous machinations of theſe runagates. But, now, attend me forth. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE VII.

Enter URSULA and BRIDGET.

Urſ. Now, Bridget, mark me well. That errant knave,
Our Spaniſh ſuitor, will anon be here.
Sir John requeſts that I do greet him kindly,
And give him flattering earneſt of ſucceſs.

Brid. Doubt not my cunning: I've been taught ere while to ſet an egg upon its little end.

Urſ. A grannum's ſecret, Bridget; but no more——
What creature's that, who with enormous ſtrides
Meaſures the pavement yonder?

Brid. 'Tis the Don——I will be ready, Madam, when you pleaſe, to ſcare him hence. [*Exit* Bridget.

Urſ. Nay, he ſhall have ſome ſour as well as ſweet;
Keen as he is, all honey is not meet.

SCENE VIII.

Enter PISTOL.

Piſ. Fair dame, I kiſs your hands, your gentle brief,
Borne by the winged Mercury, came to hand;
And ſends your ſlave to meet his amorous doom.

Urſ. I fear, Sir, I have treſpaſs'd on the bounds
Of maiden modeſty, to write ſo freely.
What will the world ſay of this ſtrange demeanour?

Piſ. Breathes he etherial air will dare to caſt
Reflections baſe on Urſula's fair name?

Urſ. Indeed, Signior Anticho, I have a woman's timidity, and am apprehenſive my behaviour in this particular will ſeem too light. Affections of ſo ſpeedy growth are blam'd, as weeds too rank to thrive in true love's garden.

Piſ.

Piſ. No general rule's without exception, lady.
The object of your choice —— Piſtolo's fame
Will ſilence all that hear and know his name.

Urſ. In that indeed I place my confidence: and yet a ſtranger, till his worth's approved, however noble in his native ſoil, is open to ſuſpicion. Not that your valour, birth, or virtuous fame I mean to queſtion; but to pleaſe my phantaſy, and juſtify my conduct to the world, I would know more of your high rank and pedigree. What is the blazonry of its diſtinction?

Piſ. Piſtolo wears his coat upon his ſword.
Behold this blade. —— The very ſteel is dy'd [*Draws.*
With blood of Infidels, Jews, Turks, and Moors.

Urſ. It hath a ſcurvy coat upon't indeed.

Piſ. True, lady, this no burniſh'd Finſbury blade,
Ta'en by young cutlers from their ſtock in trade,
And in Moorfields on holidays diſplay'd. ——
A ſoldier's weapon this, that bravely fell
In Paleſtine on Saracens pell-mell
The gift of that renown'd and peerleſs paragon
Rhodomontado hight, the king of Arragon.

Urſ. And hath Piſtolo's valour then been ſhown
In Paleſtine? That merit's great, I own.

Piſ. There by this ſword ſo many foes were ſlain,
That it was called the flaming ſword of Spain.
[*Putting up his ſword.*

Urſ. Indeed! 'Twere much a warrior to withſtand,
Who comes victorious from the Holy Land.

SCENE IX.

Enter BRIDGET in a hurry.

Brid. Good gracious! madam! Sir John Falſtaff. ——

Piſ. Ha! who? who? what's that? Falſtaff didſt thou ſay?

Urſ. No matter, Sir, you ſhall not hence away. It

It is a quondam ſweetheart; whom, for thee,
I ſhall diſmiſs with frowns, as thou ſhalt ſee.

Brid. Heav'ns, madam, I would not for the world Sir John ſhould come in while the cavalier is here. We ſhould have bloody doings, I warrant. Did not the knight, when he was here laſt, complain of your indifference, and vow vengeance on your new lover?

Piſ. (Aſide) By Styx, he'll know and foil me.

Urſ. Poh! poh! this gentleman fears him not, nor twenty ſuch. Don Piſtolo's ſword hath been fleſh'd among the moors.

Brid. Moors! lack-a-day! what talk you of moors? What are ſimple moors to ſuch a paramour as he. You know, madam, he is in deſperation at the loſs of your ladyſhip's affection.

Piſ. Thou, miſtreſs Abigail, art in the right——
Prior pretenſions if the knight doth boaſt,
Why happy man be's dole, ſay I,
Il primo venuto il primo ſervito.

Urſ. How's this, ſignior? Shall not a woman of my age and faſhion make my own choice? And can your honour thus deſert your fortune?

Piſ. Deſert my fortune! ha! why—what—O, no—

Urſ. Nay, nay, I claim protection from your ſword
Againſt this rude intruder.

Piſ. Furies!——*(Pauſes)* Oh! I have it.——
Enough—thou ſayſt—my ſword thou ſhalt command
'Gainſt pagan recreant or Chriſtian knight
Come forth, Toledo,—*(Draws)* Ha! what's this I ſee?
O blunder vile! unfortunate miſtake!
My varlet hath equipp'd me with a foil,
A blunt and batter'd foil, ſans point and temper:
It would not parry ev'n a bulwark, this.

[*Throws away his ſword, which* Bridget *picks up.*

Urſ. Bridget, let's ſee——

[*Takes the ſword, and clapping the point to the ground, bends it double.*

Alas! 'tis ſo its plain.
Ha, ha, ha, the flaming ſword of Spain!

The gift of that renown'd and peerleſs paragon
Rhodomontado hight, the king of Arragon!
[*Holding it up in deriſion.*
(*Turning to* Piſtol.)
Nay, do not take my humour thus amiſs,
I'm light of heart; but nothing mean t'offend. ——
As with this paultry foil thou can'ſt not fight,
Myſelf will with't encounter this ſame knight.
Bridget will ſafe conduct thee to the gate.
Go, and good tidings ſpeedily await. [*Exit* Urſula.

SCENE X.

PISTOL looking after her.

The gibbet be my portion, if I trow,
Whether ſhe means to jilt me now, or no:
But fata trahunt —— Abigail, lead on,
If Falſtaff's near, 'tis time that I were gone. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. A Street.

Enter Juſtice SHALLOW and Maſter SLENDER.

Shal. Take me — take me this letter, I ſay, to Sir John Falſtaff. — That is his ſuttling-houſe. I will maul his cloak-bag of chitterlings with my rapier, as I may.

Slen. And will you fight him, couſin? Well, hang me if I carry the challenge. I never could abide the thoughts of cold iron. Even a key put down my back for a bloody noſe, ugh — ugh — ugh, would always ſet me a ſhuddering.

Shal. Don't tell me — if the law will not get me my money, I'll be reveng'd of him. The tun-bellied knave ſhall not make ſuch a fool of me. I will have his blood or my money.

Slen.

Slen. His blood! O lud! O lud! Why, couſin Shallow, you are enough to——

Shal. Carry me this letter, I ſay, to Sir John Falſtaff. What is it to you? If I am kill'd, you are my heir, and come in for my land and beaves. So, do as I bid you.

Slen. Ecod, that's true. I did not think of that: if my couſin's kill'd, I come in for his eſtate. *(Aſide)* Ay, I'll carry him the challenge. Hey! here he comes, with his bottle-nos'd man, that pick'd my pocket at Windſor.

SCENE XII. Street continued.

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH.

Shal. Sir John! Sir John Falſtaff!

Bar. Sir John, juſtice Shallow calls ye.

Fal. What would the blade of ſpear-mint have with me? I have done with him.

Shal. But I have not yet done with you, Sir John? I would firſt have my thouſand pound of you again.

Fal. You would, maſter Shallow! like enough! You muſt take me then in the humour. I am at preſent ill-diſpos'd to your ſuit.

Shal. Tut, Sir John. I have ſaid I will not tamely put up this wrong. If I do, I ſhall be flouted and gib'd to death: I ſhall be purſued by the mockery of a whole hundred.

Fal. Not unlikely. But, believe me, the more you buſtle in this buſineſs, the more you will expoſe yourſelf. The more you ſtir——— you know the proverb, maſter Shallow, it is a little homely, ſo let that paſs. Yet, let me adviſe thee; reſt content.

Shal. Content! I am not content. I cannot be content. Nay, I will not be content. Give me back the money, or I will have ſatisfaction of thee.

Fal. Satisfaction, ſayſt thou? Why, thou wilt not dare me to the combat.

Shal. Such provocation would make a coward fight, Sir John.

Fal. If it make thee fight, I'll be ſworn it would: for I have ſeen thee tremble at the ſhaking of a wheat ear.

Shal. To be bamboozled! cheated! laught at! I will not put it up. By heav'ns, I will not put it up.

Fal. Well ſaid, maſter Shallow. Now I ſee there's mettle in thee. But ſurely thou would'ſt not be the firſt to break the peace? thou, whoſe office it is to puniſh the breach of it.

Shal. Sir John, there are times and reaſons for all things. If you will neither give me my money nor gentleman's ſatisfaction, I will have thee toſs'd in a blanket for a poltroon as thou art.

Fal. They muſt be ſtout carls, maſter Shallow, that toſs me in a blanket.

Shal. Well, well, we ſhall ſee, I'll parley with you no longer. Couſin Slender don't ſtand ſhill I, ſhall I, but give him the note.

Slen. Ay, ay, if coz is kill'd, I ſhall have his eſtate; and ſo there's the challenge.

[*Exeunt* Shallow *and* Slender.

SCENE XIII.

FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH.

Fal. A challenge!—By the Lord, and it is a challenge. I am call'd upon here to meet him on Tower-hill incontinently at ſingle rapier. Hoo! what a turluru! In the name of common-ſenſe is the fool turn'd madman? What means the ſimple tony by this? To get his money again? Does he think by running me thro' the pericardium to become my heir at law? The fearful ſtag is at bay, and become deſperate. But let me ſee—what's to be done here? I am in perſon too much of a knight to engage with ſo little a 'ſquire.——I have it.——Bardolph, I being your maſter and a knight, thou art by the laws of chivalry no leſs than

a 'ſquire.

a 'ſquire. Now, as I take it, this quarrel is properly thine: thou muſt meet juſtice Shallow at ſingle rapier.

Bar. I, Sir John. He has no quarrel againſt me. The challenge is given to your honour.

Fal. True, but I tell thee my honour diſdains to encounter a pitiful 'ſquire: thou muſt take my ſword and fight him.

Bar. I ſhall only diſgrace your arms, Sir John.

Fal. Go to, you will do well. He knows nothing of the ſword; and ſhould he challenge thee at piſtols, put a charge into each barrel, and preſent thy noſe at him: he will never ſtand thy fire.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, I muſt be excus'd. I never could fight in my life, unleſs there was ſomething to be got by it; a booty on the highway, or ſo.

Fal. Why 'tis for a thouſand pound, you rogue.

Bar. And where's the money?

Fal. At my caſhier's.

Bar. Well then, Sir John, why ſhould we fight for it?

Fal. Bardolph, thou art a coward; but no matter. I have a thought: I will meet him myſelf. Go, fetch the buckler I fought with at Shrewſbury. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. Tower-hill.

Enter PISTOL and juſtice SHALLOW, ſtript for the combat.

Piſ. DREAD nought, brave 'ſquire, the knight's a coward rank.

Shal. I am glad to hear that, and yet I would I had had a leſſon or two more, before I had encounter'd him.

Piſ. Bear thy point thus——ſa, ſa, friend Shallow, ſa.
Do thus, I ſay, and truſt Piſtolo's art.
I to the buxom widow will relate
This deed of proweſs.

Shal. I will eſſay; but ſome one comes this way; let us retire, and try that paſs again. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter Dr. CAIUS and his MAN.

Cai. Jack Rugby, follow me Jack Rugby: I ave hear dere is to be duel fought hereabouts, by and by. If de parties be not killed outright, dey may vant aſſiſtance. Ve muſt vatch de opportunity, Jack Rugby.

Rug. To prevent the gentlemen fighting, Sir.——

Cai. To prevent their fighting! vat ave we to do wid dat? No, you fool, Jack: to take care of the vounded. Dat is my buſineſs.

Rug. But how if the other ſhould run away?

Cai. By gar let him run: he be no patient for me.—— Come dis way. [*Exeunt*

SCENE

SCENE III.

Enter FALSTAFF.

Aha—aha——What a vile miſt there is abroad to-day! I cannot ſee a ſword's length before me. This muſt be the ſpot. But where is the adverſary? I would not have him, methinks, loſt in the fog. Maſter Shallow! maſter Shallow!

SCENE IV.

Re-enter SHALLOW.

Shal. Ay, ay, Sir John, here am I.

Fal. Saints and good angels guard us! What is this?

Shal. Come, Sir John, draw, draw.

Fal. It calls me by my name too! *Jeſu Maria!* It is no *deceptio viſus*. In the name of heav'n and earth, what art thou? Ouphe, fairy, ghoſt, hobgoblin, or demon? *Exorciſo te.—Pater noſter*——

Shal. Come, Sir John, don't think to put me from my purpoſe: you know me very well. You know juſtice Shallow to his coſt.

Fal. How! can this thing be Robert Shallow, of Glouceſterſhire, eſq; juſtice of the peace, and of the quorum? I took it for ſome ſtrolling ghoſt eſcap'd out of purgatory, by all that's terrible.

Shal. Sir John, this mockery ſhall not ſuffice you.

Fal. Nay, it is true, as I am a ſinner.

Shal. Will you fight me, Sir John, or will you not?

Fal. Fight thee! When thou ſeeſt the princely eagle deſcend to encounter the tomtit. What! ſhall the lofty elephant wield his proboſcis againſt a mite? Shall Sir John Falſtaff draw his martial ſword againſt ſuch a pigwidgeon as thou?

Shal.

Shal. What then did you come here for, Sir John? If you would not be treated as a coward, lay down your target, and draw.

Fal. Lay down my target, ſayſt thou? Who would be fool then? Look ye, maſter Shallow (ſince ſhallow thou wilt be) if I fight, it muſt be on equal terms. It is but equitable that my body ſhould be ſecur'd, when I engage with an unſubſtantial form; a thing that has none. Doſt thou think me ſuch a gooſe cap as to lay open this fair round belly to the point of thy rapier, when thou preſenteſt not a mark for me. It were as good as pricking at a lottery, ten thouſand blanks to a prize, to make a thruſt at thee. It were indeed more than a miracle to hit what, rhetorically ſpeaking, is impalpable. But come, if thou muſt fight with me, thou ſhalt not ſay I deal unfairly by thee. To draw my ſword would be needleſs: for hit thee I never ſhall.——That's flat. Therefore Toledo reſt thou in thy ſcábbard. This is my ward. (*Stands on his defence with his target.*) Carry thy point as thou wilt: if thou canſt not come into me before thou art weary, the money is mine; if thou doſt, and woundeſt me, I will then——keep it to pay the ſurgeon. So, come on.

Shal. Sir John, you are a cowardly knave, and I will kill you if I can. (*They fight. Mr. Shallow thruſts at Sir John, who receives his point always on his target.*

Fal. Well ſaid, maſter Shallow.—Bravo!—To't again.—Sa—ſa. (*Shallow breaks his ſword, and Falſtaff cloſes with him, and ſeizes him by the collar; on which Shallow falls down on his knees, and Falſtaff claps the target on his head.*

Ha! have I nabb'd you? You ſhould have appointed ſticklers, Mr. Shallow. What if I cut thy throat now? (*Taking off the target.*

Shal. Sir John, my life is in your hands: but you know you have wrong'd me.

Fal. Well then, thy wrongs be forgotten; and, on that condition, I give thee back thy forfeited life.

Shal. And I hope alſo you won't bear malice, Sir John, againſt me for the future.

Fal. By the Lord, not I. I do admire thy magnanimity and valour. Why, thou art the very mirror of proweſs, and pink of 'ſquire errantry. John of Gaunt was a fool to thee. Were I a king, thou ſhouldſt, for this day's work, be made a knight with all the honours of chivalry. Nay, by our lady, I will take majeſty upon me, and knight thee myſelf. Riſe up Sir Robert Shallow, knight of the moſt horrible order of combatants and murderers of the fifth button. And now, Sir Robert, if thou doſt not think the title I've beſtow'd on thee worth the thouſand pound I owe thee, I will for the firſt time make reſtitution. Thou ſhalt be repaid out of my wife's portion. For thou muſt know I am this night to be married, and have broke into the round ſum to make handſome preparations for my nuptials.

Shal. I give thee joy, Sir John; and as I find there is ſtill ſo much honour in thee, I will open my heart, and confeſs to thee, that both my nephew Slender and I are going to be married too.

Fal. Ay! to whom, Maſter Shallow, to whom?

Shal. I to the wealthy widow of Watling-ſtreet, and my nephew Slender, to buxom Beatrice her niece, of Bucklerſbury.

Fal. Maſter Shallow, you are deceived, Maſter Shallow. I will be a friend to thee. The widow and her niece are impoſtors.

Shal. Impoſtors!

Fal. Whores! whores, Maſter Shallow!

Shal, How, the widow of Watling-ſtreet, and Mrs. Beatrice of Bucklerſbury—

Fal. Go to, I mean thy widow—Give me thy hand; I will tell thee more as we paſs along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE V.

Enter Dr. CAIUS and his MAN.

Caius. Dey ſhake hands!—Eh, morbleu; dey be one brace of cowards. Dat fat knight never once draw his rapier. By gar did we not get more by de malade de France, dan by de Engliſh courage, we ſhould not get ſalt to our pottage, pardie. But, by gar, I will charge them both for my attendance; and if they no pay me, I will expoſe their no courage.—Come along, Jack Rugby.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Enter PISTOL.

Piſtol. The train takes fire, and all will ſoon be flame.
The ſquires are gull'd; and Dol and Quickly take
For dames of wealth. The corporal plotted well.

Enter NYM, *who gives Piſtol a letter.*

Nym. A letter for Madam Urſula; ſee if there's humour in it.

Piſtol. Ha! prize or blank! I'll open it, and ſee
Our fortune in the lottery-book of fate.

[*Piſtol reads to himſelf.*

By Jove's bright welkin, 'tis a golden prize.
Nought could withſtand the flaſh of piſtol's prime,
She writes us here ſhe ſcorns the waſſel knight,
Who keeps to-day high-revels at the globe:
Where if we meet we may in maſquerade
Be ſped; I to the miſtreſs, you the maid.

Nym.

Nym. Marry-trap, the humour is good; but how ſhall we know them?

Piſtol. In purple garb, like nymphs, they'll be array'd;
And in feign'd voices ſpeak: the word is *ſoh!*
Let us about our own diſguiſes ſtrait.
Money buys lands, but weddings go by fate.

SCENE VII. A Ball-Room.

Enter FALSTAFF, with SHALLOW and SLENDER in domino's. Their masks in their hands.

Shal. Marry Sir John, thou haſt a pithy pericranium; this is a notable contrivance. I have appointed the parties as you directed to be dreſſed in purple, and to meet us among the revellers here at the globe.

Fal. Thou haſt done well, Maſter Shallow; and I ſee you and your nephew are cloathed in the ſame diſguiſes as Nym and Piſtol.—You ſhall ſee ſport, Maſter Shallow. But ſee, the maſkers come this way. I muſt go meet the bride. [Shallow *and* Slender *put on their maſks.*

[*Enter a number of maſkers*; *among the reſt* Piſtol, Nym, *Mrs.* Quickly, *and* Doll.

Re-enter FALSTAFF, leading in URSULA, followed by BRIDGET.

Fal. Gentles, you're welcome.—You ſee I come unmaſked among you. It were ſuperfluous for him to hide his face who could not be concealed for his belly. Could I maſk that indeed, I might paſs in diſguiſe. But come, begin the dance: I hope there will be yet concealment enough in this revelry to defeat the rogueries contrived in darkneſs, and bring them to light.

Piſtol to Nym. Nym, who are thoſe in purple veſtments clad?

Nym. The two in green.

Piſtol. In robes of Tyrian dye.

Nym. By their garb they ſhould be the parties; let us accoſt them. The prieſt is ready without. We will be ſpeedy; and, when ſped, return unmaſk'd to tantalize the knight.

[*They go up to* Quickly *and* Doll, *and take them out.*

A Dance.

Piſtol and Nym re-enter unmaſked.

Fal. Piſtol, how now? wherefore haſt doff'd thy maſk? Art thou the maſter of this feaſt? or am I thine?

Piſtol. That is as fortune bids, and time ſhall ſhew,
Some mount aloof, while others truckle low.
Sir knight, no more your ancient and baſe tyke,
Piſtol was born to wield the potent pike.

Fal. Piſtol, thou art always in the clouds. Art thou drunk? or haſt thou got a commiſſion?

Piſtol. Gold honour buys, and Urſula hath ſtore.

Fal. How, raſcal! doſt thou mean to rob my wife?

Nym. Thy wife! marry that were a good jeſt.—I ſee the humour runs well.

Piſtol. Not thine, but mine; proud Baſiliſco knight! Without, juſt married, waits thy quondam flame.

Fal. To thee?

Piſtol. To me.

Fal. Nym, What ſayſt thou?

Nym. Marry, Sir John, that's the ſhort of it: and I myſelf was juſt now married to Mrs. Bridget her woman.

Falſtaff, turning to Urſula. Say, my fair queen of Sheba, is this true? unmaſk: nay, gentles, all unmaſk, that we may ſee what faces are put on.

Urſ. You, Sir John, can anſwer for me.

Bridget. And you for me, madam. Marry a corporal indeed! the fellows are drunk.

[Piſtol *and* Nym *look at each other with confuſion and aſtoniſhment; during which time* Mrs. Quickly *und* Dol Tearſheet *enter unmaſked, and, paſſing by* Piſtol *and* Nym, *(who ſtart back with freſh aſtoniſhment) go up to juſtice* Shallow *and Maſter* Slender.

Fal.

Fal. How now, you bare-fac'd ſtrumpets! what do you mean? This is no brothel: play no gambols here.

Quick. Marry come up, Sir John; you will not hinder my going to my huſband. Mr. Shallow will protect me; my dear Mr. Shallow.

Dol. No, nor me neither, were he twenty Sir John Falſtaffs. Sweet Mr. Slender.

Shal. Goody Quickly, looſe your hold I pray you; I know you, Mrs. Quickly.

Slen. Ay, and I know you too, Mrs. Dorothy.

Dol. O ho! do you ſo? What, Sir John hath blown us; hath he? But no matter; he cannot unmarry us.

Quick. No, truly, that he can't.

Fal. Nor would I: for ſince whores and rogues have conſorted, I have never ſeen four better matched.

Quick. I to wiſe Juſtice Shallow.

Dol. And I to fooliſh Mr. Slender.

Shal. Not ſo, hoſteſs; keep your diſtance, I pray you.

Slen. No, no, keep off, Dol, keep off.

Quick. Plain Dol! do you hear that Mrs. Slender?

Dol. And hoſteſs, truly! do you take that Mrs. Shallow?

Fal. Away—ye termagant jades: or I will demoliſh your frippery.—There are your cuckolds. Piſtol, Nym, why ſtand ye there like mutes? Are you faſcinated at the ſucceſs of your mummery? Or are you ruminating on the comforts of cuckoldom by anticipation.——Take hence your crooked ribs.

[Piſtol *and* Nym *go and take* Quickly *and* Dol *by the hand.*

Quick. What, has there been a trick, then, played on us in theſe diſguiſes? Was I married to you, Piſtol?

Piſtol. Dame Quickly, thou art mine. The fates have croſs'd us.

Fal. Nay, I'll be ſworn they have joined you.

Dol. And was I married to you, Nym?

Nym. Even ſo, Dol. I am heartily ſorry for it; but luck hath turn'd tail upon us, that's the trick on't.

Dol. A very ſcurvy trick, indeed, but I had ſo many

huſbands before, that one more or leſs breaks no ſquares with Dol. Come, Mrs. Quickly, be of good chear: Piſtol is better than nobody: he will protect thee, by outſwaggering the ſwaggerers.

Piſtol. Contented I, ſince ſo the fates decree,
Soldier no more, a victualler I'll be;
The martial ſword exchange for carving knife,
And cut out viands for the means of life.
No more in anger fight, but joyous dine,
And 'ſtead of drawing blood, draw ſparkling wine;
Nay, ſhould Sir John himſelf my ſervice lack,
At the boar's head, he'll find a glaſs of ſack.

Fal. But wilt thou put no lime in it, Piſtol?

Piſtol. No, by Falernian Bacchus, for my knight.

Fal. Then will I be thy gueſt. Nay, by'r Lady, thou ſhalt for once, be mine too. I will not break off the thread of our quondam familiarity with ſo little grace as Majeſty hath done. I do invite ye all, therefore, to ſupper with me. And if you cannot laugh over the ſucceſs of your own contrivances, be merry on the conſummation of my nuptials.

Come, ſpouſe, tho' long indeed hath been our courting,
We're not quite paſt the days of love and ſporting;
'Tis true, a younger bridegroom had you ſped,
He might have been leſs prone to ſleep in bed;
Yet, ev'n in autumn, ſome ſpring flowers may grow,
As there are lillies in September blow:
Youth's wild oats ſown, 'tis ne'er too late to mend;
The worſt once paſt, the better is the end.

The END.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD.

Enters reading a Card.

THE muſe of Shakeſpeare's compliments! — A card
T'excuſe this evening's enterprizing Bard!
Great his preſumption, to confeſs the truth:
But, as he pleads the paſſion of his youth,
Together with the magick of her charms,
Attracting him reſiſtleſs to her arms;
Tho' ſomewhat by ſurprize, ſhe owns, ſhe ſuffer'd,
Yet, as no actual violence was offer'd,
She's willing, if the audience ſhould agree,
For this one time to ſet th'offender free.
We women ſoon forgive, if not forget,
The crimes our beauties make the men commit,
Eſpecially when once we're paſt our prime,
And Shakeſpeare's muſe, like me,'s the worſe for time.
For, tho' ſhe charm with fancy ever young,
Tho' heav'nly muſick dwell upon her tongue,
Loſt many an artleſs ſmile and dimple ſleek,
Which ſat alluring on her virgin cheek;
Beauties, that faded on the gazer's eye,
And no cold-cream of comment can ſupply.
As for what Merc'ry in the Prologue told ye;
Pray, let not that from clemency with-hold ye.
That Hermes was of old a lying blade,
And practic'd in impoſture, as his trade;
The patron he, or claſſic lore deceives,
Of cheats, foreſtallers, higglers, huckſters, thieves.
Beſides,—to tell you a ſtage-trick of ours —
But you'll not ſpread the ſecret out of doors,——
The man was no more Mercury, than I am
Queen Hecuba, the wife of Trojan Priam.
A meſſenger from Phœbus! He a god!
I can aſſure you all, 'twas Mr. Dodd;
His dropping from the clouds, was all a ſham;
And his pretended errand but a flam.
We've heathen gods of paſte-board, made to fly
On hempen cords acroſs the painted ſky;

Thoſe

EPILOGUE.

Thoſe canvaſs clouds, that dangle there above,
Inveloping the throne itſelf of Jove!
His tale fictitious too, tho' told ſo glib;
For take it on my word, 'twas all a fib.
Old Falſtaff in Elyſium!—To my thinking,
So great his natural tendency to ſinking,
That to the ſhades if he had once deſcended,
To bring him back, not Atlas had pretended.
Dramatic ſprites (at leaſt they tell me ſo)
Dwell not with ſaints above, nor devils below:
But, form'd th' imagination to engage,
During their ſhort-liv'd paſſage o'er the ſtage,
As mere ideal characters exiſt,
And ſtand as cyphers mark'd on Nature's liſt;
To genius giv'n a delegated power
To form theſe tranſient beings of an hour,
Which, from this mimic world whene'er they go,
Are free to range in fancy's pimlico,
A limbo large and broad; which in the ſchools
Is call'd by ſome the Paradiſe of Fools.
Feræ naturæ THERE, their preſervation
Is purchas'd by no game aſſociation:
The poaching plagiary alone denied
A privilege, granted to each bard beſide;
Who, tho' a cottager, to try his ſkill,
May ſhoot, or courſe, or hunt them down at will;
In his own paddock may the ſtrays receive,
And ſcorn to aſk a lordly owner's leave.
Not but that *here*, the Author of the play,
By me begs leave ſubmiſſively to ſay,
" None more than he reveres great Shakeſpear's name,
" Or glows with zeal to vindicate his fame."